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Belle Brittan on a tour

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BELLE BRITTAN ON A TOUR, At Newport, AND HERE AND THERE.

“VIVE LA VIE!”

Hiram Fuller

“‘Tis life whereof our nerves are scant, Oh! life, not death, for which we pant; More life, and fuller, that we want.’” Tennyson.

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1858.

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PUDNEY & RUSSELL, PRINTERS, 79 JOHN-ST., N. Y.

To Belle Brittan, WITH A FEW WILD FLOWERS FROM THE WOODS OF ILLINOIS.

I send you flowers—wild flowers only— Oh, touch them, take them with a reverent hand! I gathered them FOR YOU, in wood paths lonely, A shrinking band.

I send you wild flowers, faded tokens; You see the glory of their morn is gone; Each fragile censer, filled with incense, broken, Which flushed their dawn.

I send you violets, all wan and shrunken, The purple wine from every chalice spilled; Their dewy eyes, which drank the sunbeams, sunken, Their soft life stilled.

Poor little flowers! ye all bloomed and faded In chilly corners, where no zephyrs hide; Your narrow are of beauty shadows shaded, Until you died.

No one to love you in the darksome forest; No lauding lip to e'er your beauty vaunt; Your life, with none to draw the sweetness from it, Was one long want.

Thou, who dost gather from enchanted bowers The rarest blossoms which entrance the eyes, Has thy rich heart a home for these pale flowers, In pilgrim guise?

Wilt take my flowers? From their faded faces No thrill of pleasure will your spirit glean? Not beautiful?—if born in sunnier places, They might have been.

Oh, take my flowers! tokens from the giver Of all her being may e'er prove to you, A wayside blossom blighted: never, never, To bloom anew!

Her life's aroma fainting, failing, dying, Will wander, breathing at your far-off shrine Love's warmer odor, from your being rising A thing divine!

Chicago, *May,* 1858.

To

THE LOVELIEST LADY IN THE LAND, Whose Beauty is the Light of the World,
A MELODIOUS MEMORY, A HEAVENLY HOPE, A PERPETUAL INSPIRATION,
WHATEVER IS WORTHIEST IN THESE PAGES IS DUE, AND DEDICATED.

A few friends, with whose wishes it is pleasant and easy to comply, have requested the publication of these hastily written Letters in book form. Although written on the run, they have *not* been “carefully revised and corrected by the author;” but, with the exception, here and there, of the substitution of a few “stars” in place of something better or worse, they re-appear “with all their imperfections on their heads.” They will doubtless receive unjust censure and undue praise; but I am too well accustomed to both, I trust, to be permanently injured by either. If I have committed errors in fact, in taste, or in sentiment, or written a word to wound a sensitive heart, I am sorry for it; and if the scattered leaves have given pleasure to any reader, it may be hoped that they will not be less welcome when gathered into—may I say, a bouquet? [a book-eh?] BELLE BRITTAN.

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BELLE BRITTAN ON A TOUR.

LETTER I.

Willard's Hotel, Washington, *December* 29, 1857.

My Dear —:

No matter why, or wherefore; but here I am in Washington, (a place not worthy of the name,) and have “had an interview,” as the phrase goes, with the bachelor President of this great Republic—the wifeless father of a great and growing family of thirty millions of people! What an inspiration of dignity in the consciousness of being the Head of such a nation! A man of authority, of patronage, and of power—one of the chiefest Chiefs of the civilized world.

Mr. Buchanan is an old man—too old to be President—too old to flutter the ribbons of your “fair correspondent,” although it is said that many “caps are set for him” upon younger heads than mine. 2 14 But for a veteran of threescore years and ten he seems a remarkably fresh, flush, good-looking man; and the crook in his neck, when it inclined his face to me, instead of being a deformity, gave him a peculiarly confidential and interesting manner of conversation.

I found the “White House” in a state of unusual neatness, not to say elegance; and yet, to me, it never seemed so sad; for I remembered some cosy hours passed in its smaller social rooms, with the accomplished and beautiful Bettie Bliss and the intelligent and amiable Miss Fillmore. The only familiar household face I saw was that of McManus, who, for the last twelve years, has ushered in and out all the great and little folks, who “called to see the President.” No change of Administration touches him—an exception to the revolutionary rule of “rotation.”

In the reception-room and in the antechamber there were, perhaps, fifty men waiting for an audience, with more or less anxiety in their faces—a crowd of beggars, either wanting office, or to be retained in office. Thank my stars, I had nothing to ask for; and when I told the President I had no “business” to be there, his face was lighted up and relieved with a most welcome smile; and giving me 15 an extra shake of the hand, invited me to pass the evening, socially, with Miss Lane. He then said to the nervous-looking crowd of waiting gentlemen: “I have to observe the miller's rule, gentlemen; and those of you who wish to speak to me on business can do so now, in the order of your coming.” Whereupon they

began to approach him one by one, pop a word into his private ear, and then fall back. I noticed that the President listened with a placid, yet imperturbably non-committal look, making no answer that amounted to a yes or no; but with a bland and politic assurance that each particular case should be taken into special consideration. What a bore! I exclaimed, as I descended the stairs so many thousands have trod with palpitating hearts. My dear old bachelor Buck! Virgin spinster that I am, I would not share your cares for all your honors; and I would rather adorn a cottage ornée, with the unknown man after my own heart, than to reign over the cold formalities of the “White House” forever.

My next call was one that interested me vastly more; but from which I returned in a still more reflective, not to say melancholy mood. The Red Chiefs of the Western wilderness —the aboriginal natives of the soil—the chosen delegates of the Poncas 16 and Pawnees are here, in all the glory of paint and feathers, to “ratify a treaty,” and learn from their “great father” that they can no longer occupy the pleasant hunting-grounds where their ancestors have fished and fought, and lived and loved, for unknown ages. This hard and cruel fate was distinctly stated to them by the Commissioner; and I have seldom heard any tone more touching than the half grunt, half groan, with which they responded to every sentence of the interpreter. Two or three among them are fine-looking fellows; bright-eyed, broad-chested, athletic men, with brave and fearless faces, and expressive, sonorous names, good enough for Longfellow to weave into his Runic rhymes: Wagosoppee, the “Whip,” (principal chief;) Geshthouwago, or the “Strong Walker;” Michael Cerre, or “Washkomonny, the Hard Walker;” Dishmonickagahe, or the “Lone Chief;” Showcabbee, or the “Threatening Cloud;” and Fantamganoghee, or the “Standing Buffalo,” &c., &c.

One of these warriors of the wilderness seems to be regally proud of his necklace of human scalps. But they are the savage trophies torn from his own people, not from the heads of the white men. These Poncas must move westward from Nebraska, and they are here to sign the treaty that banishes them 17 from their fathers' graves. Is it not sad? But life, even to the most favored and refined races, is full of sad necessities. A few years more, and the remnant of the once mighty red race will vanish from the great continent

which once was all their own, and their history will be but a plaintive echo, growing fainter and fainter to every succeeding age. “Slowly and sadly they climb the western mountains, and read their doom in the setting sun.”

A grand ball at Postmaster-General Brown's uses up the day and me together. It was the “opening ball” of the season; and a regular Washington jam. All the beaux and belles in the city were there. Eighteen hundred invitations were given out; probably a thousand persons were present. Gov. Brown is rich, and entertains like a prince. His family consists of a wife and “one fair (step) daughter, and no more, whom he loveth passing well.” Several members of the Cabinet, and most of the Foreign Ministers were present, including the gentlemanly Lord Napier and his beautiful lady. But in point of *style* the New-York ladies decidedly bore the palm. Mrs. Bergh, Mrs. Sickles, and Mrs. Clark were elegantly dressed, and shone as the particular stars of the evening. Among the “lions,” none were more marked or more courted than *Mackay* , the poet-editor, 18 whose modesty of manner is as rare as his character and his talents are meritorious. The dancing (the waltz, the polka, the lancers, and the quadrille) was kept up until one o'clock, when your “fair correspondent” retired with profound satisfaction, to seek that solitary solace—“tired nature's sweet restorer—balmy sleep.”

LETTER II.

Willard's Hotel, Washington, *January 3d* , 1858.

My Dear —:

Lord Napier is a brick. Learning, as I suppose, from the Picayune, which everybody here who is anybody always carries in his pocket, that your “fair correspondent” was at Willard's, his lordship did the handsome thing. He came, and saw, and conquered. I am not entirely—that is, not formally “out” yet; but I could not resist the attractions of Lady Napier's grand ball on Thursday evening last. It was a magnificent affair. Shall I tell you something about it? In the first place, I was “taken” with the excellence and systematic

arrangement of the dressing or undressing rooms. Our 19 “things” were taken off by servants, carefully Folded, and *ticketed* , to prevent all possibility of loss, or confusion of cloaks, shawls, hats, hoods, &c., &c.; an admirable system, which should be introduced at every grand gathering. On entering the reception room, Lady Napier, a fine-looking woman, welcomed every guest with a gracious smile, a cordial hand, and a graceful courtesy that inspired a sort of self-complacent ease, even in the most awkward and ungainly “members;” while his lordship stood by her side, repeating the welcome, no less warmly, and passing the guests on to the ball-room. I have seldom seen a finer-looking couple; and never witnessed manners more charming. It touched me like a strain of sweet home music; such graceful affability; such delicate attentiveness; such gentle and such generous hospitality. What magnetism there is in a look, a smile, a tone, or a motion! And how the sweet sunshine of one lovely face can lend “a nameless grace,” not only to a whole household, but to a whole city—not to say a whole universe. Lord Napier is a model host, as well as a model Minister; young, yet mature, modest, yet manly, he nobly expresses the intelligence, the gallantry, and the dignity of England. “An upright, downright Englishman,” to steal a line from Mackay. The 20 company, as Mrs. Partington says, was extremely “researchy”—the *crême de la crême* of Washington: Cabinet Ministers, Foreign Ministers, with here and there a “minister of grace.” I might give you a long catalogue of the “dignities” present; but this is a custom of the letter writers “more honored in the breach than in the observance.” The rooms were brilliantly lighted—a great element of success—and the atmosphere redolent of flowers, which is far more agreeable than the compound of miscellaneous odors, natural and artificial, one is usually regaled with in crowded ball-rooms. At 12 o'clock everybody wished everybody “a happy new year,” the band played “Yankee Doodle,” then “God Save the Queen,” and at half-past 12 the “march” for supper, which was an elegant but not an extravagant portion of the entertainment. Must I mention the, 'belles of the evening?” This is always a delicate and difficult question, and one on which “opinions differ.” But the sparkling daughter of the Postmaster-General, and the lifeful wife of one of our New-York city “members” (to say nothing of the bashful, blushing, budding, &c., whom modesty forbids me to name), reminded me as much of

flowers surrounded by honey-bees as any thing I can think of. (*Quere:* Do bees ever *sting* the flowers 21 while stealing their honey?) Among the best *talkers* present were the accomplished daughter of the Secretary of State, a daughter of the Hon. Edward Everett, and the handsomer and “better half” of one of your Louisiana Senators. The most agreeable American *beau* I met there (and meet often) is the young, fine-looking, fine-mannered “member” from your own city. He and the brave young “member” from Boston are among the ornaments of the capital. The literary “lion,” and the most retiring man of the evening, was Charles Mackay, the Song King, who reigns here in the social circle, as well as in the universal heart of humanity. But I am lingering too long at the ball (not the *bowl*).

“Too late I've staid—forgive the crime— Unheeded flew the hours, How noiseless falls the foot of Time That only treads on flowers.”

The most *missed* person at Lady Napier's was Miss Lane, the lady of the “White House.” She is mourning the loss of a relative, and does not go to balls. But having passed the earlier part of the evening in her company, her sweet, serene face went with me into the crowd, neutralizing the effect of many a gayer one. Did the reader ever try to drink beer after Burgundy? 2*

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On New Year's Day, under the convoy of two generals, and accompanied by the poet Mackay, I saw all that was brightest and best in Washington. There is more domestic splendor here than I expected to find at our “Republican Court.” The houses are large and elegantly furnised—with a great profusion of books, paintings, and statuary. The President's “reception” was an awful jam. Miss Lane looked like a queen. She had shed her black, and came out in violet. But I could not help pitying her while she stood there shaking hands indiscriminately with thousands, knowing (for such is our woman's nature) that she would rather have one good, long than all the good wishes showered upon her from the miscellaneous multitude. Speaking of the delicate subject reminds me of a conundrum that has been bothering me: Why is a kiss like a sandwich?

Last evening the beauty, the dignity, and the fashion of the city made a brilliant congregation at Philharmonic Hall, where Mackay gave his lecture on “Song.” The ambassadors, the secretaries, “the senators and representatives in Congress assembled,” turned out in strong force. Lady Napier brought the distinguished lecturer to the hall in her carriage, and Miss Lane's lovely presence lent lustre to the 23 occasion. The lecture and the audience were worthy of each other. By the way, Mackay is strongly urged to extend his journey as far south as New-Orleans; and if he does, you need not be surprised to find your “fair correspondent” somewhere in the “tail of the comet.” Great Britain, and conjunctively—your own little Belle Brittan.

LETTER No. III.

Willard's Hotel, Washington, *January* 10, 1858.

My Dear —:

The capital of the nation is gay, gayer than New-York. But it is no unusual thing for the *head* to be giddy while the *heart* is sad. The great commercial, or vital centre, has felt the full force of the financial pressure; but Washington, which lives on government salaries, is comparatively slightly affected. There is a continual round of balls, dinners, and receptions; and the excitement of these private entertainments, thus far, quite neutralizes the doings in Congress. I shall not attempt to describe the splendid balls of Lady Napier, M'me Albuquerque, Mrs. P. M. G. Brown, Mrs. Slidell, or any other of the many magnificent fêtes of the last ten days. All 24 *that* I leave to the more facile pen of your whom I have been happy to meet in all these gay and festive scenes. She is more at home in the muslin mysteries of feminine “fixins,” and can indulge in toilette liberties denied to rougher hands. Neither will I encroach upon the “news department,” so admirably filled by your indefatigable correspondent, who lets no item of interest escape his news-trap from either end of the Avenue. A few impressions of men and things in general is all I shall attempt while “on the wing.” And, *apropos* , the “wings” of the Capitol disappoint me, and

the new Hall of Representatives strikes me as a magnificent failure. It is in the form of a parallelogram—a mistake to begin with; and it lacks both height and light. The chairs and desks of the members are rich and luxurious, and the Speaker's *mountings* are particularly sumptuous; but the Speaker's Room is as disagreeably gorgeous as a North-river steamboat. By the way, why does not some good, independent, national, rational, radical democrat move to abolish the title of “Speaker,”—a term borrowed from the Commons of England, when it designated the only man in the House privileged to *speak* to a representative of the Crown. Chairman, or President, would be far more proper, as well as more American.

25

Mr. Orr, I should say, presides well. He is one of the largest and noblest-looking men in the House, which is made up of the most ordinary material, with evidently a large profusion of mere politicians of the commonest sort. And, if the presiding officer would change his formal announcement of “the gentleman from Bungtown has the floor,” to the “member from,” &c., &c., he would less frequently be guilty of a misnomer, as a member of Congress is not, *ex necessitate* , a gentleman. A friend of mine, who has a namesake in the House, is often asked, on being introduced to strangers, if he is “the member from —.” His annoyance at the presumed identity led him to astonish a Foreign Minister the other day by saying, with shocking emphasis, “No, I'll be—if I am!” Nevertheless, there are a few highly accomplished gentlemen in Congress, well educated, and good-mannered. But the great majority talk without courtesy, debate without decency, spit on the new carpet without compunction, and some even *blow their noses in their napkins!* These are disgusting *facts;* and such as we would hardly forgive a foreigner for uttering; and my only motive for mentioning them is to mend them. The marble steps of the Capitol are covered with nasty “cuds,” and yellow spots of tobacco juice, constantly wiped up by 26 the trailing skirts and scollopped skirticoats of the ladies. As Mrs. Partington says, “it is enough to make one's *george* rise” to think of it.

The exciting topics before Congress, and before the country are, as all the world knows, “Filibusterism in Central America, and Niggerism in Kansas.” The President is between the two fires. He favors the pro-slavery constitution of Kansas; and the whole North becomes a hornet's nest about his ears. He rather sustains Paulding in the arrest of Walker; and the entire South, that “honey-fuggled” him yesterday, turns tail and stings him to-day. Between the two, Mr. Buchanan is not sleeping on a bed of roses. But while he is determined to *quash* the movement of private filibusterism—or, as Haskin of New-York boldly said in the House the other day—while he goes against the “petty larceny” attempts of Walker, he is preparing to “astonish the natives,” and consolidate the people by an act of “national grand larceny,” in accordance with the spirit of the Ostend manifesto, and the devil's doctrine of “manifest destiny.” Mexico, Cuba, and Central America are down in the programme. The hungry, aggressive spirit of the Democracy must be appeased. The “malignant philanthropy” of Anglo-Saxonism must have an outlet. The great army of the unemployed 27 *sans-culottes* are “spoiling” for a fight. The American eagle is longing to lay an egg in the Cordilleras mountains, and Comonfort is “tipping her the wink.”

One of the most interesting scenes I have witnessed in Washington was the presentation of the Chiefs of the Poncas, the Pawnees, and the Pottawattamies, to their “Great Father,” in the great room of the White House. There were at least thirty of them, and about half of the number made speeches of not more than five minutes on the average. They looked at the President full in the eye, bore themselves proudly, and spoke without the slightest hesitation or embarrassment. But if the interpreters did them justice, there was a great sameness in their sentiments. They had come a long way to see their Great Father. The first part of the journey was tedious, and they soiled their moccasins; but the latter part of the way they came quick, and kept all the while looking out to see if they could see their great Father. They were glad to see him, and to find that he was not poor. They thanked the Great Spirit for bringing them here; and they hoped now they should be like their Great Father—no longer poor. This was the burthen of all. They wanted money. Money was everything. 28 As the early part of the President's education had been neglected in this

respect, and as he could not speak the language of the original American people, his answer had to be three times interpreted. He gave each tribe good advice, and insisted on their shaking hands with each other, although at war at home. It made some of their bare, brave bosoms swell to do it; but they went through the ceremony with great dignity, and an apparent determination to keep the peace so signally ratified.

In the Patent Office, now extended over the entire square, there is a most beautiful and remarkable collection of “Modeled Fruits,” which is one of the Capitol curiosities well worth seeing. The collection consists of about two thousand specimens of the principal fruits and esculent roots of the United States, and has occupied the artist, Mr. Townsend Glover, some six years to bring the work to its present state. The specimens are all cast or modeled in a hard material, and then prepared and painted in oil colors. It is intended to furnish a ready means for the identification and classification of fruit, and to indicate, by appropriate labels, the soil and locality where such will best thrive. Congress has not yet purchased the collection, but I believe an appropriation for the purpose has passed both Houses. To farmers and horticulturists 29 this collection of Mr. Glover is invaluable, and the Government should purchase and pay for it without delay.

The weather here for the past ten days has been wondrous fine) and overcoats have been an incumbrance. The Avenue looks almost as gay as Broadway. The hotels are crowded, and the resident population has risen to sixty thousand.

LETTER No. IV.

Willard's Hotel, Washington, *Jan.* 14, 1858.

My Dear —:

My trunk is packed, my P. P. C's are issued; and where I shall turn up, remains to be seen. But, before starting for “fresh fields and pastures new,” let me give a parting glance at this city of magnificent hospitalities, as well as “distances.” It seems to me that Washington

never goes to bed; never gets entirely sober. Indeed, there is not time, between one entertainment and another. Every day there are “receptions;” every night there are balls;” and there is no such thing as a day of rest. “Madame—is at home Sunday evening.” How the members of Congress—such of them as are known as 30 “society men”—manage to attend to the affairs of the nation in general, and of their constituents in particular, is more than I can understand. Several of them have informed me that they employ private secretaries to write their letters and answer cards of invitation. What is the object, the motive of all these entertainments?—it may be asked. Perhaps it would not be fair to question too curiously into this matter; and it would certainly be a most amiable conclusion to attribute all this costly hospitality to a purely benevolent disposition to bring people together for the sole purpose of feasting them and making them happy. As the moral philosophers teach us that most human motives are “mixed”—a compound of selfishness and philanthropy—so we may take it for granted that these brilliant and expensive parties are given for, at least, a double purpose. Some have fine houses and elegant pictures to exhibit; some have great wealth to display; and some have fair daughters, more or less attractive, “in the market.” The foreign ministers have a national dignity to maintain; the cabinet a race of social rivalry to run; a few of the rich “members” have handsome wives to gratify; and the wealthy and fashionable citizens a sort of “West End” circle to adorn and guard. Corcoran, Tayloe, Hill, &c., represent Washington; Seward, Slidell, Douglas, Gwin, &c., the Senate; Napier, 31 Albuquerque, Stoeckel, &c., the foreign nations; and then there is a large sprinkling of colonels, commodores, captains, and generals, who represent the army and the navy in social life; and thus there is no end to the gaities and gallantries of Washington. The mystery is, how a regular *habituè* can survive such a campaign, and all the concomitant champagne and oysters. To go through ten dinner parties in one week, and five dancing parties in one night, is a rather laborious pleasure. But “the labor we delight in physics pain,” and of this sort of “physic” I have had enough during my three weeks' whirl in Washington, to last me, at least, through the coming welcome season of “Lent.”

A word touching the great and all-engrossing topic of dress may not be uninteresting to your fair readers. As I have before written, the New-York ladies, as a general rule, are the best dressed ladies in Washington. In this respect we are hard to beat. Not that we wear richer fabrics or costlier jewels. *Tout au contraire* , some of your Southern belles beat us in their nightly display of laces and diamonds, and in “low necks and short sleeves.” But the more tonnish of our New-York ladies, whatever fondness they may have for precious stones and spider web trimmings, think it vulgar always to wear them. And 32 as to “low necks,” we leave them to “low people.” In the presence of certain distinguished ladies here, I have felt grateful for the use of a pink fan to conceal my blushes.

“Hide, oh, hide those hills of snow,” &c.

Now, do not think me squeamish or prudish. I am not a bit of it. But there is a time and a place for all things; and a miscellaneous gathering of promiscuous people is not the proper time and place for a stunning exhibition of a beautiful bosom.

One of the brightest looking and most sweetly dressed young ladies I have met here, is the graceful, bright-eyed, dignified daughter of the late Judge Woodbury, of New-Hampshire. I have only seen her in immaculate white, and with only her swan-like throat bare. But her “courtesy” in the Lancers would take me off my feet if I were—; but I am not. Still she reminds me of one of Mackay's sweet songs, which, after repudiating Love as a dangerous and troublesome illusion, says:

“But when I look on Ellen's face, With arch endearment gleaming, And from her eyes see Love's replies In every glance come streaming— Not Anthony, who lost a world, Nor Paris, son of Priam, Nor any fool who died for love, Was such a fool as I am!”

33

Mrs. Senator Douglas, Mrs. Slidell, and Mrs. Thompson, are among the acknowledged “beauties” of our republican court. Mrs. Douglas will do her full share in dragging the

triumphal car of the “little giant” up to the White House. She looks like a queen, and if the Constitution permitted, who could refuse to vote for one so queenly? Mrs. Slidell entertains as handsomely as any lady in Washington, and possesses every accomplishment of mind, manner, and person, to grace a foreign court. I have, therefore, a purely patriotic and most unselfish desire that she should represent us at the brilliant court of Madrid.

Lady Gore Ouseley, I am told, (though I have not seen it,) has introduced the English novelty of the red petticoat, now all the rage in London. They are made of woolen, with black stripes woven in, and are said to have a most coquettish and bewitching effect—although that will depend upon the person who wears, and the manner of handling them. The poet Mackay, who sings of every thing that strikes his eye or his heart, thus pitches into the crimson skirt:

“Oh, the red, the flaunting petticoat! That courts the eye of day; That loves to flare, and be admired, And blinks from far away. It may delight the roving sight, And charm the fancy free: 34 But if its wearer's half as bold, I'll pass and let her be, With her red, her flaunting petticoat— She's not the girl for me.”

But this poetic shaft was not aimed at her ladyship, who is a very charming and accomplished woman, and an American at that.

To-night, several distinguished gentlemen, mostly members of Congress, give the popular poet, Mackay, a dinner. Your “fair correspondent” is honored with an invitation, and highly honored, too, as no other ladies are to sweeten the feast by their presence. To go, or not to go, that's the question. And, as you editors say, of a rebus, “the answer in our next.”

Yours, in a cloak and a quandary, ——.

LETTER No. V.

Willard's Hotel, Washington, *January* 15, 1858.

My Dear —:

Yielding to the persuasions of friends and to the temptations of a good dinner (womanly weaknesses), I “laid over,” as the rail-road folks say, another day, 35 in order to see the poet Mackay crowned at the Capitol. It was a beautiful and memorable occasion. The company was of the selectest quality; the wines and viands fit for an Olympian feast; and the honored guest of the evening worthy of all the eloquent praise so generously and gracefully bestowed upon song and song makers. Among the distinguished persons present were Gen. James Shields; Senator Seward; Hon. Mr. Sherman, of Ohio; Hon. Mr. Burlingame, of Massachusetts; Hon. Mr. Boyce, of South Carolina; Hon. Elijah Ward, of New-York; Governor Price, of New-Jersey; Gen. Aaron Ward, Gen. Quitman, Capt. Meigs, Lieut. Maxwell Woodhull; Hon. Mr. Parrott, of Kansas; Charles Lanman, Esq., Henry Bergh, Esq., George Francis Train, Esq., Col. Fuller, &c. You can readily believe that, with the meeting and mingling of such intellectual elements (to say nothing of the “choice spirits” supplied by the *Bon Gautier* , in whose elegant saloon we were assembled), the “good time,” so long promised by our poet, came with a perfect rush. Gen. Shields presided; and on the “removal of the cloth” (or rather what was on it), introduced the distinguished guest in a strain of earnest and eloquent commendation. Dr. Mackay rose, blushing, amidst a vociferous “three times three and one more.”

36

But, instead of giving us a speech in mundane prose, proceeded, after a felicitous acknowledgment of the honor conferred upon him, to recite the following poem, prepared for the occasion:

JOHN AND JONATHAN.

Said brother Jonathan to John, “You are the elder born, And I can bear another's hate, But not your slightest scorn. You've lived a life of noble strife, You've made a world your own— Why, when I follow in your steps, Receive me with a groan?

“I feel the promptings of my youth, That urge me evermore To spread my fame, my race, my name, From shore to furthest shore. I feel the lightnings in my blood, The thunders in my hand, And I must work my destiny Whoever may withstand.

“And if you'd give me, Brother John, The sympathy I crave, And stretch your warm, fraternal hand Across the Atlantic wave, I'd give it such a cordial grasp That earth should start to see, And ancient crowns and sceptres shake That fear both you and me.”

Said brother John to Jonathan, “You do my nature wrong; I never hated, never scorned, But loved you well and long.

37

If, children of the self-same sire, We've quarrel'd now and then, 'Twas only in our early youth, And not since we were men.

“And if, with cautious, cooler blood, Result of sufferings keen, I sometimes think you move too fast, Mistake not what I mean. I've felt the follies of my youth, The errors of my prime, And dreamed for you—my father's son— A future more sublime.

“And here's my hand, 'tis freely given, I stretch it o'er the brine, And wish you, from my heart of hearts, A higher life than mine. Together let us rule the world, Together work and thrive; For if you're only twenty-one, I'm scarcely thirty-five.

“And I have strength for nobler work Than e'er my hand has done, And realms to rule and truths to plant Beyond the rising sun. Take you the West and I the East! We'll spread ourselves abroad, With trade and spade, and wholesome laws, And faith in Man and God.

“Take you the West and I the East! We speak the self-same tongue That Milton wrote, that Chatham spoke, And Burns and Shakspeare sung; And from our tongue, our hand, our heart, Shall countless blessings flow, To light two darkened hemispheres That know not where they go. 3

“Our Anglo-Saxon name and fame, Our Anglo-Saxon speech, Received their mission straight from Heaven To civilize and teach. So here's my hand—I stretch it forth; Ye meaner lands look on! From this day hence there's friendship firm 'Twixt Jonathan and John!”

They shook their hands, this noble pair, And o'er the “electric chain” Come daily messages of Peace And Love betwixt them twain. When other nations, sore oppressed, Lie dark in Sorrow's night, They look to Jonathan and John, And hope for coming light.

The effect was electrical. It brought every man to his feet, and made every eye sparkle with the generous glow of fraternal fellowship. It will bind the two nations together closer than the Atlantic cable, and is worth more than all the international speeches of the American Congress and the British Parliament. Philosophy, philanthropy, fraternity, and “manifest destiny,” are nobly linked together in the golden chain; and it will live a perpetual inspiration in every Anglo-Saxon heart, as long as we

“Speak the self-same tongue That Milton wrote, that Chatham spoke, And Burns and Shakspeare sung.”

After such a beating up of enthusiasm, every man 39 present spoke under the strong pressure of a poetic impulse. Not one hesitated, when called upon, to respond; and the world loses much for lack of the presence of the stenographic reporters. Your “fair correspondent” was handsomely toasted, and poetically “called out” by Dr. Mackay, whose graceful compliments fell upon her bended head like a gentle rain of flowers.

Believing, with my model Christian hero, Paul, that it is unseemly for woman to speak in public (I never wish to speak to more than one person at a time), I called on Col. Fuller, my nearest friend and most devoted companion, to respond in my behalf. I wish I had both the memory and the space to give you his heart. felt words, poured forth in grateful homage

to Poetry and Song. He spoke of the great rareness of the true poet; and compared him to the century plant, that sweetens the darkness of the ages; of the delicacy of his organization—the fineness of his ear—the tenderness of his heart; and compared him to that cunning little eclectic, the honey-bee, which steals for us the sweet secret of the flowers, &c., &c., and ended with the following “sentiment”: “ Song —That little golden cup which all of us have sometimes borrowed, by which to convey to the lips of woman the loving libations of our hearts.” But I must not let my pen 40 run beyond my limits; and the poem I enclose will make this imperfect report of our poetic banquet acceptable to all your readers. Excuse the casket for the sake of the jewel. This is the last *Capital* letter you will get from Belle Brittan.

LETTER No. VI.

McClure House, Wheeling, *Jan.* 17, 1858.

My Dear —:

M'me de Stael says, “traveling is a sad pleasure;” and I thought so too, as I took my seat in the car yesterday morning, in Washington, before daylight, with a journey of 650 miles before me. The day was dark and dreary, and the rain it rained and was never weary; and, more than all, I was altogether “out of sorts,” owing to a week's suffering from an attack of the prevailing “Washington influenza”—the result of late hours, over-heated rooms, and other “Capital offences” against nature.

We left (and this means one more than the usual editorial “we”) at six o'clock; and, after wheeling all day and all night, arrived at Wheeling at half-past five o'clock this morning, a distance of 400 miles; 41 and in which we have to overcome the Alleghany mountains. My regret is, that the sublimest passage of our journey was made in the night; and that, too, in a night of unrelieved darkness. To get a train of cars safely down the side of a high and precipitous mountain was truly a difficult problem; but the stupendous thought has been bravely conceived, and magnificently engineered. We zig-zag down on a track that

reminds one of the diagonal bars which ladies sometimes wear across their bosoms. If the reader does not catch the idea, I cannot stop to explain it. And, strange to say, “Appleton's Illustrated Hand Book” altogether overlooks this almost miraculous achievement—surpassing, in bold ingenuity, Napoleon's famous conquest of the Alps. Can anybody give us the name of the “original inventor?”

The most picturesque scenery on the road (or that portion of it which we saw by daylight) is in the vicinity of Harper's Ferry. The most enthusiastic artists and tourists have not exaggerated the boldness, wildness, and variety of its beauties. The smoky city of Cumberland has sombre associations to thousands who have been ruined by speculating in its mining stocks; but I chance to remember it more pleasantly in connection with the following nursery anecdote: A certain little lady, at the tender age of 42 two years, who had been repeatedly promised to be taken on a visit to her cousins in Cumberland, popping down on her little knees, the night before making the expected journey, to repeat the classic formula of infantile devotion, and, being “full of the subject,” ventured upon a line of extemporaneous addition:

“Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take To *Cumberland in the morning!* ”

It is a larger-looking city than I expected to see, and seems to be penetrating the mountains in all directions. But I have not time to dwell upon the many points of interest on the road. It is somewhat surprising that this great work has not been sketched, and described, and illustrated in a style worthy of its rare merits; and the passage over it yesterday of the poet-editor of the Illustrated London News, whose fine, artistic eye lets no work of beauty or grandeur escape him, may, perhaps, form an era in the history of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company. In England, such a road, running through such a picture gallery of nature, would have been popularized by paintings, panoramas, and tales throughout the country. I regret to learn, that the receipts of the 43 company have fallen off heavily the past year; and like most of our great railroads, (*all* the greatest of them) the

enterprise “ *don't pay.* ” The only remedy is to raise the fare; and if travel diminishes, run fewer trains.

Traveling, I have quoted, “is a sad pleasure.” I have seldom entered a car, about to start on a long journey, without noticing, especially in the “ladies' car,” eyes red with weeping. There is always somebody bidding somebody a long, if not an everlasting farewell; and the final scream of the departing engine is like a knell of death to some fond heart. I remarked this yesterday on leaving Washington, when the tears of one poor woman seated near me fell like rain; although she appeared to have her husband and children, who should be all the world to her, at her side. But still she wept and sobbed behind her veil for the loved ones she was leaving. A little further on, I chanced to be seated near another lady, with black hair, large, luminous eyes, and very pale cheeks, revealing at a glance the “touch of Sorrow's wing.” On hearing me cough, she gently and graciously proposed to close the window, although afterwards confessing that the close and heated car made her very sick. Moved by mutual sympathy, always the best of introductions, 44 we gradually melted into conversation; from which I learned that traveling, to her, was truly a “sad pleasure.” She had been confined twenty-two weeks to her room by a hemorrhage of the lungs, and was flying to the softer South, to save her consumptive life. What touching tenderness suffering creates! None can love who have not suffered; and none can truly love without suffering.

“Who hath not his bread in sorrow eat, He knows you not, ye Heavenly Powers.”

The great physical discomfort of the journey was the over-heated atmosphere of the cars. We had a fire demon on board, who was all the way crowding the red-hot “salamander” with wood, and the heat at times was almost suffocating. It actually caused a burning sensation to the hand to wave it through the heated and devitalized air of the car. The conductor was extremely taciturn, scarcely giving a civil answer to a civil question, and evidently reluctant to give us any information touching the way-side scenes and incidents of the journey. He seemed to be more engrossed in his attentions to one or two “female women” on board than by the general duties of his position. The president and directors

of all railroad companies should have a sharp eye on the manners as well as on the morals of their employees, 45 especially such of them as come in direct contact with the passengers, and who have it in their power to contribute much to the comfort or discomfort of the traveler.

On arriving at the “McClure House” (one of the hotels that we read of), not a drop of hot drink of any description could be had; and when, like the Irishman who dreamed of ordering whisky hot, and woke up before it came, we concluded to “ *take it cowld,* ” not even that nor anything else could be had, bibible or edible. After twenty-four hours of hard railing, bad eating, and worse sleeping, to turn into a cold bed, in a cold room, “on a cold stomach,” was the coldest sort of comfort. And yet, in all the parlors and reception-rooms, good bituminous fires were burning. Coal is cheap, but hot water is not to be had.

Wheeling is a city of some twenty thousand inhabitants; but as yet, I have only seen the tops of its murky houses. To judge of it from such a point of view, would be like giving an opinion of a man after seeing only the top of his head—especially as the roofs here to-day have a little “scratch” of snow on them.

We have passed the region of buckwheat cakes. Alas! 3*

46

LETTER No. VII.

Burnet House, Cincinnati, *Jan.* 20, 1858.

My Dear —:

We left the dingy, dreary, dismal city of Wheeling (I will not use any more adjectives beginning with *d* to describe it) at about eleven o'clock in the morning, and reached Cincinnati at eleven o'clock at night—distance, 260 miles. Falling, fortunately, into the hands of two very intelligent and gentlemanly conductors (Mr. Marrow, to Columbus, and

Mr. Bradley to this place), the long journey was shortened, and softened, and enlightened by their company. I must convey to these kind strangers my grateful acknowledgments for the information they gave me touching various points of interest on the road; and for their gallant attentions to your “fair correspondent.”

The country through which we passed oppressed me with one thought—its inexhaustible and undeveloped resources. There were immense corn-fields, which had yielded bountiful harvests of corn for twenty, thirty, forty, successive years, and with rather an annual increase than diminution of the number of bushels to the acre. These fields are not manured—not “cultivated;” merely planted and 47 harvested; and the golden corn, for lack of labor, is not yet all gathered (and it is mid-winter) from thousands and thousands of acres. The coal pits also seem to be inexhaustible. At Wheeling, rich, bituminous coal sells at a cent and a half a bushel; and yet, for consuming less than half a bushel, the hotels charge a dollar. But the most wasteful sight is the rotting timber that strews the forests and the fields for hundreds of miles. Wood is of no account, but an encumbrance. The trees are girdled and left to die, and fall, and rot, and disappear. Why will multitudes of human beings continue to linger and starve in large cities, when nature is everywhere inviting them to come and partake of her generous bounties; and to live purer, healthier, and happier lives? Why will men seek to live by trading, stealing, lying, and begging, when there is room, and work, and wealth for all in the beautiful and fruitful wilderness of the West? Why continue to traffic in rags or rum; in jewelry or gin; in knick-knacks or gim-cracks; in fish or finance? or why crowd the “learned professions,” and live like leeches on the life-blood of others, when, by a small investment in seed corn and vine roots, one may “realize” a sure and honest “return” for capital and labor—thirty, sixty, or an hundred-fold, besides feeling that he is 48 prosecuting a “legitimate business,” and working, as it were, in the garden of God, like the primitive man in Paradise?

I am more than pleased with Cincinnati. It is a fine, flourishing city. The streets are clean and regular, and the buildings, private and public, are generally in good taste, and quite up to the Metropolitan standard. The Burnet House, the Court House, the Post Office, and

some of the retail and wholesale stores, would show well among the hotels, the public edifices, and the trading palaces of New-York. But the novelties, or “lions,” or specialties of the place are Longworth's Wine Cellars and the Hog Factories. These are the “peculiar institutions” of the place, and my time thus far has been devoted to the mysteries of the pork chopping and wine making. The slaughter of half a million of hogs per annum creates a business and a revenue which I will not stop to calculate, beyond the fact that each hog is worth as the animal enters the slaughter mill about ten dollars. If the “blood of the swine” could wash away the sins of a city, Cincinnati would be as immaculate as its own lard.

But the blood of the grape has for me far greater attractions, as well as pleasanter associations, and *Longworth* is the Bacchus of the New World.

49

“The Roman mound, the Grecian urn, Are silent when we call; But still the purple grapes return, And cluster on the wall.”

I have been through cellars to-day containing two hundred thousand bottles of “Catawba,” and seen casks holding twelve thousand bottles each of the precious nectar. The vintage of 1854 is just now being finally prepared for market, and it is pronounced superior to that of any other season. It is perfectly delicious. We were also treated to a glass of “Sparkling Isabella” from the fountain head, which was “drank in silence and standing,” to the health of one whose name is even more inspiring than wine:—

“I drink this cup, to one made up Of loveliness alone; A being of her gentle sex, The seeming paragon; To whom the better elements And kindly stars have given A form so fair, that like the air, She's less of earth than heaven.”

Of course, the sentiment was proposed by a gentleman. But I have not time to-day to “do justice” to this delightful subject. I shall return to it, I promise you, again and again. For the time being I have abandoned tea, coffee, and all common drinks, and use the Ohio water for purposes of ablution only. 50 Before I leave I mean to bathe in “Catawba;” and if I am

“born to be drowned,” Heaven send that it may be in an element so divine as the blood of the wine benign.

“There grows no vine By the haunted Rhine, By Danube or Guadalquiver, Nor on island or cape, That bears such a grape As grows by the Beautiful River.

“Very good in their way Are the Verzenay And the Sillery, soft and creamy But Catawba wine Has a taste more divine, More dulcet, delicious, and dreamy.”

The poet, Mackay, delivered a lecture on Song, last evening, to a delighted crowd of two thousand persons. The next lecture, before the Mercantile Library Association, will be given by the late editor of the New-York Mirror, who has sometimes, strange to say, been complimented as the author of the letters signed Belle Brittan.

51

LETTER No. VIII.

January 24, 1858.

My Dear —:

The first visit to a city is like an introduction to a stranger—we give a glance and take an impression, always, and instantly, either favorable or unfavorable; and, as far as my experience goes, a “better acquaintance” usually confirms the first impression. Everybody we meet attracts or repels us at the first sight; and I hold it an honest obedience to the law of nature, to follow my impulses as far as the duties, the proprieties, and the conventionalities of society will permit. If the new acquaintance is attractive, follow it up; if repulsive, drop it, and thus avoid hypocrisy. So much for the “elective affinities,” to say nothing of the “passional attractions.”

I like Cincinnati—its hotels, its houses, its streets, its women, and its wines. When a certain gentleman was introduced to the Duke of Wellington as a citizen of Cincinnati, the

old duke remembered the place as the home of Miss Groesbeek, and the city of Catawba wine. I shall also associate it with choice wine and winsome women; for here I found “ Bel Smith ” *at home* , and the pure juice of the grape as delicious and as gushing as—

52

“Great Nature's Nile, That rises higher than Egypt's river.”

I have also met many generous, cultivated and hospitable gentlemen, who seem to have no business and no pleasure but to devote themselves to strangers. I may not mention the names of persons, but the places of interest deserve a passing remark. The city itself, now numbering nearly two hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, is well worth visiting. I have met “the man who felled the first tree,” and who is still hale and active. Such rapid growth has of course made many of the original settlers millionaires, while hogs, grapes, and whisky are making the fortunes of the rising generation. Mr. Longworth, who is doing more for the cause of health and temperance than all the quack “reformers” in the country, is very rich in real estate, with seven hundred thousand bottles of wine in his cellars. He is a very remarkable man—active, intelligent, benevolent, enthusiastic, and devoted to his specialty—his great enterprise of teaching the Americans the cultivation of the vine, and convincing the world that the United States can produce a better wine, in time, than any of the famous vineyards of Europe. We have every variety of soil, situation, and climate, and Mr. Longworth assures me that we have at least five thousand varieties of the grape.

53

On visiting his vineyards in the vicinity of the city, which yield from six to seven hundred gallons to the acre, we found the “boss” to be an old soldier of Napoleon the Great, and as devoted to the memory of the Emperor as he is enthusiastic in the culture of the vine. Producing a very choice brand, of the color of amber; and with a bouquet that filled the room (called the minor seedling), at the suggestion of the company, it was christened “Mackay,” in honor of the distinguished poet, who was present, and who has written a flowing anacreontic in praise of Catawba. So the wine, and the song, and the song-writer

will pass on to mutual immortality. Another specimen of the nectar, of a most delicate aroma and a most delicious flavor, with a tint like the blush on the cheek of beauty, was baptized, in honor of your “fair correspondent,” as the “Belle Brittan wine.” To kiss such a goblet is enough to intoxicate a stoic; and, as Byron said of kisses, this also is to be estimated by the length.

“But thou, my Catawba, Art mild as a rose, And sweet as the lips Of my love when they close, To give back the kisses My passion bestows.”

The hog killing I shall not see—it's a bloody business; 54 and, with all due respect for the porkocracy of the place, I am not a believer in pork. Moses knew what made the people scrofulous, when he forbade the Egyptians to eat it; and yet I confess to having been tempted with ham here, which would almost persuade a Jew to be a Christian —so rich, so rosy, so tender, and so sweetly saturated with sugar and spice, and the smoky savor of burnt hickory and juniper. Ah, yes! another delicate wafer of that, if you please. It may be like forbidden fruit—all the more exquisite to the taste, for the bitter consequences that ensue. But there are some temptations in this world, whose strength I trust may be offered as an apology for the weakness of the tempted; and ham—a transubstantiated, apotheosized ham—is one of them! Of the whisky, which is manufactured here in enormous quantities, I have nothing to say in commendation, except, that it is not as bad as the liquor usually sold under the name of brandy. I am told one firm turns out twenty-five hundred barrels a week, and that the business is very rapidly increasing. It seems to be the common drink of the people; and yet I am assured that street drunkenness in Cincinnati is extremely rare.

Of the drives in the vicinity, that to the “Spring Grove Cemetery,” by way of Clifton, is very beautiful. 55 The country is rich and rolling; and vineyards and villas are springing up in all directions. Among the notabilities residing in the suburbs, Judge McLean has a very handsome mansion, overlooking a lovely region of country. Mr. Robert Buchanan, the author of an admirable little volume on “Grape Culture,” has a beautiful vineyard and a fine

house at Clifton. A few years ago, he bought the land of Mr. Longworth at fifty dollars an acre; and it is now worth fifteen hundred an acre, six acres of vines yielding an income of five thousand dollars a year. The cemetery, like all cities of the dead, is a sad, sweet, silent place, and none but a thoughtless mind and a callous heart can visit this sanctuary of rest, without an increased sympathy for human sorrow, a deeper reverence for human love. The paths that are trodden by mourners' feet, and the grass that is bedewed by mourners' tears, must ever be sacred to all who have mourned and wept; and he who has not, loves neither God nor man.

The only other “staple” of the place which I will mention is—the women—always a delicate and tender subject. Comparisons are “odorous;” but I must say, that some of the handsomest women I have met here have come from “over the river”—from Old Kentucky. At a social gathering of not over fifty persons, the other evening, a large proportion of the 56 ladies were Kentuckians, and no less than six of them were dressed in crimson silk, and all were fine-looking. Were I subject to epidemics, I should have been in danger of the *scarlet fever.* But, like one who has run the gauntlet of the whooping cough, the measles, the mumps, the—, &c., I feel that I can pass through a whole city full of “dangerous cases” innocuously, and defy even the raging fever of the red petticoat, which is just now spreading much faster than the Gospel.

LETTER No. IX.

Burnet House, Cincinnati, *January* 27, 1858.

My Dear —:

I still linger in this pleasant “Queen City of the West,” and shall leave its fine hotel and its hospitable people with reluctance. In a day or two from this date, I expect to be *en route* for your gay and sunny city, glancing, perhaps, at Louisville, St. Louis, &c., &c., by the way. I wish I could take the “Burnet House” along with me, as I have found no hotel as comfortable since leaving New-York; yet I have pleasant recollections of your

far-famed “St. Charles,” and know something of its 57 pleasant and princely proprietors. How much a clean, comfortable, well-kept hotel has to do with the stranger's first and last impressions of a place! It should be the first consideration of every city and town to establish and maintain a good home for travelers. The spirit of hospitality should insist upon the maintenance of a first-rate public-house. Coleman, of the “Burnet,” has been educated in the best school, and understands his business. I am glad that his enterprise and perseverance are being liberally rewarded; and, despite some heavy losses, he is already, I believe, the sole owner of this magnificent property, comprising the site, building, and furniture of the Burnet House, worth, at least, half a million of dollars.

The evening of the 25th, the ninety-ninth anniversary of the birth-day of Robert Burns, was zealously celebrated by a gathering of some hundred and seventy-five gentlemen, all enthusiastic lovers of the poet, around a sumptuous supper table, in the ladies' ordinary of the “Burnet.” Mr. David Gibson presided, and the poet Mackay, whose father was a personal friend of Burns, was the “particular star” of the night. A Scotchman and a poet, and the grandson of the accomplished Mrs. Rose, so frequently and so admiringly mentioned by Burns, in 58 his correspondence, Mackay brought me (a delighted listener) nearer to the great bard than I ever felt before. His speech was full of thought and sentiment; and although not quite “loud” enough to tickle these Western ears, it was received with marked enthusiasm. He spoke “To the memory of Burns;” and in a most loving and fraternal spirit. I enclose a copy for your private perusal or for publication in the *Pic* , if “space permit.”

Col. Fuller, of New-York, being called upon by the President, spoke earnestly in admiration of “the poet whose genius no land could monopolize; and whose songs, day and night, are sung unceasingly—nerving the soldier in the hour of battle to “lofty deeds and daring high;” fanning in the peasant's breast the peaceful fires of patriotism; keeping alive in the human heart the holy hymn of love; and at the sacred shrine of the cotter's hearth, beating the heavenward flame of devotion.” The speaker then recited some original stanzas from a song of Burns that “could not be entirely printed, not on account of its length, but its

breadth;" and also repeated a concluding stanza to "John Anderson my Jo," written by Charles Gould, Esq., the banker of New-York, which completes that immortal song, in a manner quite worthy of the "finish" in which the poet left it. It 59 will be recollected that Burns, who distils this sweet song from one much older, much coarser, and much longer, takes the good old couple gently down the hill of Life, and leaves them to sleep lovingly "thegither at the foot." Mr. Gould exalts them into heaven, thus:

"John Anderson my Jo, John, When we has slept; thegither, The sleep that a' maun sleep, John, We'll wake wi' ane anither. And in that better world, John, Nae sorrow shall we know, Nor fear we e'er shall part again, John Anderson my Jo."

Sweet and comforting lines to a pair of life-devoted lovers, who feel that eternity cannot exhaust their mutual affection, are they not?

Col. Fuller closed his impromptu speech with the following "sentiment"—borrowing, I think, the lines from Mackay:

" *The Poet* — Who sings a music to the march of man— The lark high caroling to armies in the van."

Last evening I listened to the same gentleman who appeared as a lecturer (his *first* appearance, I believe) before the "Young Men's Mercantile Library Association." The subject was, the evils of the credit system—the miseries of debt. The lecturer 60 was unfortunately suffering from hoarseness and a sore throat, which impeded the flow of his delivery; but the views presented were bold and novel, and seemed to be well received. The argument was this: "Credit begets extravagance; extravagance creates debt; and debt drives men to crime, to dissipation, to despair. It gives the meanest man on earth power to oppress the noblest, and bares the generous bosom of Antonio to the blood-thirsty knife of the Jew."

The following “fair specimen,” introduced as an illustration, comes pretty close home to some of us:

“The young, pretty, exuberant, and fashionable Mrs. Fitzdazzle, of New-York, married a splendid establishment, encumbered by a man, whom the world calls her husband; but whom she always addresses, even in private, as Mr. Fitzdazzle. A dashing, volatile, ambitious woman is Mrs. Fitzdazzle, who has been gaily ‘expanding’ under the delightful delusion that her husband's income was $100,000 a year, one-fourth of which she found no difficulty in spending for diamonds at Tiffany's, for laces at Stewart's, for bonnets at Ferrero's, for a summer splurge at Newport, and for brilliant and stunning entertainments at home. And yet, paradoxical as it may sound, my Lady Fitzdazzle has spent no money. She has bloomed, flourished, and spread herself like a green bay tree, entirely under the credit system. Like a watch, she ran on tick, until her husband, a Wall-street ‘operator,’ found himself ‘wound up’ so tight that his little jewel of a wife could tick no longer. The ‘Ohio Life and Trust’ exploded; and the house of Fitzdazzle & Co. came down with a crash, plunging his gay-plumed wife into worse than widowed woe, leaving her like the picture of the dejected milk maid in the old ‘New-England primer,’ when ‘down fell the pail of milk, with all her imaginary happiness.’

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“But the moral to be pointed by the tale of Mrs. Fitzdazzle's misfortunes is this: If, in all her thoughtless, reckless extravagance, she had been compelled to count out the hard cash, would she have parted with five thousand pretty little gold dollars for that glittering necklace (now for sale at an awful discount), or fifteen hundred dollars for a gossamer shawl, that can be drawn through a finger ring, and not warm enough to wrap a baby in; or one thousand dollars for that dashing dinner dress, irreparably ruined by the upsetting of a glass of claret; or one hundred dollars for that delicate thimbleful of foam, called a pocket handkerchief? Certainly not. Mrs. Fitzdazzle admired the articles; desired the articles in order to ‘astonish the Browns.’ She had only to pronounce the magic words—‘charge it’—

and the baubles are sent home. Mrs. Fitzdazzle is but the type of a countless class—the victim of an extravagance fostered by credit.”

With this sad picture, sketched, I should judge, from life, I will leave you for a little profitable private meditation. Perhaps some of your readers may go and do likewise. Catch me ever ordering anything to be “charged” against me again! I'll wear my toes out of my gaiters—all the colors out of my shawl—all the trimmings out of my bonnet—before I'll ever run in debt another dollar! So the lecturer of last night has one convert, to begin with, and I mean to “organize a Hard-currency-pay-as-you-go party; and upon this platform, I have a presidential candidate. (and a matrimonial one, too) in my eye. Here's a cup of Catawba to both! 3

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LETTER No. X.

Galt House, Louisville, *January* 31, 1858.

My Dear —:

My guardian angel must have protested against my leaving Cincinnati, for I started clouded with presentiments of ill, and the journey hither was a series of disasters. No human bones were broken, but several iron ones were badly smashed. The evening before, I had been detained and entertained at a social party by the peremptory hospitality of our whole-souled host until nearly 3 A. M.; and between that late or early hour to prepare to pack, to write P. P. C's., to sleep, to take a private breakfast with mine host of the Burnet House, and to be at the cars at 9 A. M., was rather “crowding the mourners.” But I was “in for it,” and my motto is *nulla vestigia* , &c.

The day was dismal—heavy clouds hung frowning in the heavens, and there were several abortive atempts at a snow-storm. Nature seemed to try to do something severe, and couldn't, which only fretted her the more; and so the day grew black, and the wind blew

bleak, and the cold clouds spitefully spat alternate snow and rain; and all the way was *a 63 muck* , and all Ohio and Indiana was but a mass of mud. So much for the world without; and I am sorry to say, that the world within too nearly corresponded with the clouds above and the mud below. The Beautiful River that ran along by our side seemed to have been named in the spirit of irony, Its waters were turgid and its current sluggish. I first made the acquaintance of the Ohio at Wheeling, renewed it at Cincinnati, where it is somewhat improved by receiving a constant “Licking;” and again we have met and “renewed our mutual assurances,” &c., at Louisville. But I am still unable to sympathize with the enthusiastic Frenchman who called it “La Belle Riviere.” It is good enough for steamboating, for sewerage, and other practical uses; but thus far I have seen nothing in the stream or its banks particularly romantic or poetic. Besides, its “ups and downs” make it a treacherous companion. One never knows where to find it; and yet, not having floated on its yellow bosom, I confess that I am not qualified to do it justice. We are too apt to draw conclusions from mere passing glimpses.

To return to the cars. The first point of interest on the road was the vicinity of North Bend, where, the evening before, the steamer Fanny Fern exploded, killing some twenty persons, and wounding many 64 others. The spot was pointed out to us; but nothing remained above the water to tell of the catastrophe. The boat burned to the water's edge and sunk. The body of the poor woman who sat nursing her sick child has been recovered, and identified as the wife of Samuel Evans, of Johnson county, Missouri, from whom she had separated, and was on her way to her early home in Mason county, Kentucky. The newspapers are giving quite a romantic interest to the lady's name and destiny. Our train had not proceeded far before my sombre train of thought was broken by a spasmodic scream of the whistle, and a sudden “breaking up” of the speed of the cars. An accident was announced, but not a serious one. We had only run over a hand-car; nobody hurt. A few miles further on, another shriek from the throat of the fire-horse, and a fearful rushing at the “breaks,” startled the passengers to their feet. I *felt* the collision before it came, but sat still, as I always do in the first moment of peril—a moment in which a whole life-time

flashes over the wires of memory. In a second there was a crash, and a consciousness that the danger was over. We had run into a freight train, smashing our engine and baggage car, and throwing the hindmost of the freight cars off the track. Nobody hurt—an almost 65 miraculous escape. We had just been taking in wood and water, and had not attained a speed of over ten miles an hour. Had the collision occurred three minutes, or, perhaps, one minute later, the result would have been fatal to some of us.

I have traveled many thousand miles on American railroads, and have never witnessed so fearful an accident as this; and I am sorry to add, that there is no excuse for the engineers. It was the result of the most culpable, stolid, and reckless carelessness. The “responsible” parties on both trains are unfit to command a mud scow. We were delayed over three hours, but consoled ourselves with the reflection that all our bones were whole. On arriving at Seymour, where a train was waiting to take us to Louisville, and where we were due at four o'clock P. M., the conductor assured us that he could run us in by half-past seven, which somewhat relieved the nervousness of the poet Mackay, who was announced to lecture there at that hour on that evening. But the day was an evil one. We had got only about twenty-five miles, half-way from Seymour to Louisville, when our engine broke; and it was nearly nine o'clock when we reached Jeffersonville, opposite this city, having done the distance from Cincinnati, one hundred and forty miles, in twelve hours. 66 But the troubles of the day were not yet ended. The ferryman had put out his fires, and refused to take us across. And so, without our baggage, we were compelled to take shelter in a small tavern, where, after fasting all day, we ordered “supper,” and a corkscrew; but, alas! the latter luxury was not to be found. Suggesting that the much-desired instrument might possibly be borrowed of the druggist, our obliging landlord started on the errand of love, and returned triumphant. Your “fair correspondent” repaired to her little “stateroom,” ordered hot water (a fire was out of the question), uncorked a bottle of “something good and strong,” put into her pocket by a friend, of blessed memory, in Cincinnati; got up an internal glow with the hot “preparation,” dropped her outer garments, rolled herself up like a cocoon in a big shawl, and slid into bed with a benison on the man that invented “brandy

toddy hot.” Just then, the following lines of Cowper slid into my memory—and I fell asleep at peace with “all the world and the rest of mankind:”

“There's mercy in every place; And mercy, encouraging, thought, Gives even affliction a grace, And reconciles man to his lot.”

Were it not a womanish weakness, I would relate my dream. But let that pass. The dawn of the 67 morning saw comfort returning. Crossing the river in a diagonal ferry, of about a mile, we were soon at the “Galt House,” where good rooms, a good breakfast, and a bright sunshine began to compensate and to obliterate the mishaps of the yesterday. *Telle est la vie!* We soon forgot, in the brightness of the present, all the darkness and dreariness of the past; and they who walk on flowers to-day, forget the thorns that tore their feet but yesterday. Socrates declared that the pleasure he experienced on being freed from the thongs that had bound his limbs more than compensated him for all the agonies he had suffered while tied. And when I reach the sunny city of the South, I expect, with the first breath of its fragrant atmosphere, and the first “smile” that greets me at the St. Charles, to forget all the *disagrèmens* which betide the traveler on his way, even though that way lead to Paradise itself.

“There's a good time coming, boys, Wait a little longer.”

P. S.—I confess that this is not a very lady-like letter; but then one does not always feel in a lady-like mood. Mrs. Pecksniff will throw that glass of brandy and water in my face; but I can stand it, and more too.

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LETTER No. XI.

Galt House, Louisville, *January* 1, 1858.

My Dear —:

The great staples of Kentucky are whisky and women. I have kissed both, and prefer the latter. The city of Louisville is the metropolis of the State. I have been here two days and not seen much of the place; being still the victim of the prevailing influenza which “sticketh closer than a brother.” The population of the city is about sixty-five thousand; and the hog business is one of its principal sources of revenue. Last year they despatched some 245,000 of those “unclean beasts;” about half the number killed and packed in Cincinnati. Among the best known “institutions” of the place are—G. D. Prentice and the “Galt House.” The former is not at home—off on a lecturing tour; but the latter is overflowing with hospitality, a real luxury to travelers; good rooms, clean beds, soft coal fires, and an excellent table. It is one of the most cosmopolitan establishments in the Union; and the Louisvillians may well be proud of it.

The daily newspapers here are ably conducted and widely known; and the “gentlemen of the 69 press” are gentlemen. Osborne and Shipman of the *Journal;* Harney of the *Democrat;* and Haldeman of the *Courier* are, in ability and manners, above the average of the fraternity. Louisville is the home of Col. Preston, one of the noblest specimens, not only of Kentucky, but of our American humanity. It is rumored from Washington that the President intends to offer Mr. Preston the mission to Spain. I hope it is true. He is the right man for the place. Young, good-looking, eloquent, accomplished, “six feet and well proportioned,” Preston's presence would add dignity and grace to any court in Christendom. The United States have been too often misrepresented abroad by coarse, vulgar, ignorant and ill-looking men; and Mr. Buchanan will confer a special favor on every American citizen by making ministers of such men as Preston.

At a little after daylight this morning, a vigorous female cry of fire, in the hall of the Galt House, hurried us out of bed with the alarm that the hotel was on fire. On rushing to the window I found the building opposite—across a narrow street—in flames. It was a magnificent, though a fearful spectacle. The snow was falling rapidly; and the flakes of fire and the flakes of snow mingling in the atmosphere, like a shower of pearls and

rubies, presented a 3* 70 scene I will not attempt to describe. The burning building was occupied as a warehouse for alcohol, cologne, &c., and the exploding casks and the falling walls added the element of grandeur to the pyrotechnic exhibition. Just at this moment, Mr. Raine, the proprietor of the Galt House, who had been lying at the point of death for several days, took his departure for “that bourne from which no traveler returns.” The excitement of the alarm snapt the attenuated thread of life; and the spirit mounted, through storm and fire, into the serener “Land of the Hereafter.” The deceased is much lamented. All the servants and slaves mourn his loss. He was a single man; about fifty years of age; a native of Kentucky; and had, during his five years of proprietorship, given the Galt House a high and wide reputation. His disease was consumption, which had confined him to his room for three or four weeks. My gallant friend Coleman, of the Burnet House, who gave me a letter of introduction to Mr. Raine, spoke of him warmly as a “good fellow”—a common phrase of commendation, and yet one of the very best of epitaphs.

The poet Mackay, who is *en route* for your city, will deliver a lecture here to-night, and leave in the morning for St. Louis, where he proposes to take the 71 boat on Friday, due in New-Orleans on Tuesday or Wednesday. (Will our friends of the “overflowing St. Charles” make a note of this?) Before leaving Cincinnati, while under the inspiration of Longworth's nectar, Mackay's exuberant Muse descanted the following sweet song, of which the readers of the Pic will have the first smack:

CATAWBA.

I.

Ohio's green hill-tops Glow bright in the sun, And yield us more treasure Than Rhine or Garonne; They give us Catawa, The pure and the true, As radiant as sunlight, As soft as the dew, And fragrant as gardens When summer is new. Of all the gold vintage, The purt and best— Catawba, the nectar And balm of the West.

II.

Champagne is too often A trickster malign, That flows from the apple And not from the vine. But thou, my Catawba, Art mild as a rose, And sweet as the lips of My love, when they close, 72 To give back the kisses My passion bestows. Thou'rt born of the vintage, And fed on its breast, Catawba, the nectar And balm of the West.

III.

When pledging the lovely, This sparkler we'll kiss; When drinking to true hearts, We'll toast them in this— For Catawba is like them, Though tender, yet strong, As pleasant as morning, As soft as a song, Whose delicate beauty The echoes prolong;— Catawba! Heart-warmer! Soul-cheerer! life-zest! Catawba, the nectar And balm of the West.

This song, and Longfellow's poem, will cause such a run on Longworth's cellars, that I fear his “stock on hand,” large as it is, will be exhausted before another vintage is ready for the market. Tip a wink to mine host of the St. Charles to get in a liberal supply of “Longworth's Still and Sparkling;” and to be sure and have a dozen or so well iced, on the arrival of, yours and theirs, Belle Brittan.

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LETTER No. XII.

St. Louis and So Forth, *February* 7, 1858.

My Dear —:

St. Louis is destined to be a great city—the New-York of the interior. The journey hither from Louisville is tedious, and not particularly interesting. But perhaps my “impressions by the way” are less favorable and less just in consequence of the mishaps that have attended us since leaving Cincinnati. On leaving Louisville, we had not run a hundred

rods from the depot before there was a jolt and a cry—“the engine is off the track!” The switches had been neglected, and the eyes of the engineer were not in the right place, and so we were stuck fast in the mud. Returning to the city, which we originally entered under a series of difficulties, I summoned to my aid all the patience and resignation at my command, and “laid over” at the Galt House until one o'clock at night, when we took a second start; and, with the exception of three mortal hours wearily wasted in waiting for the train at Seymour, (one of the most God-and-man-forsaken places I have ever seen, not even excepting Jeffersonville), we reached the great metropolis of the Mississippi at 74 about 4 o'clock P. M., a distance of some three hundred and fifty miles. What should we have done by the way but for the bottled consolation sent us by a Louisville lady of blessed memory? I have sometimes been sacrilegious enough to moisten my profane lips with a wine bearing the sacred name of “Lachrymæ Christi,” but it does not compare in the quality of inspiration with the *Smiles of Christy,* which have kept my spirits from sinking into my gaiters during the long, sleepless, and perilous nights of this monotonous journey.

A good room, with a good fire, at the Planters' Hotel, a warm bath, and ten blessed hours of most oblivious sleep, and I am again reconciled, and ready to receive agreeable impressions, and to reciprocate as best I may. How pretty the chambermaid looked, who came to my room before I was dressed, with a handful of letters from home. Blessings on that great and glorious institution, the post-office, which bridges over the long chasm of twelve hundred miles between me and—. Without communication, absence would be death.

I have said that St. Louis is bound to be a big city. It cannot be otherwise. It is manifest destiny. The people of the place feel that it must be so, and are governing themselves accordingly. 75 Everything is projected on a large scale, as if the men who are laying out the streets, and the architects who are planning the public buildings, were inspired by the vastness of the mighty river, the richness of the surrounding country, and the multiplicity of rail. roads, all converging here as to a common centre of commerce, to conceive plans commensurate with the future magnificence of the great metropolis of the West. The

population of the city is now about one hundred and fifty thousand. I don't hesitate to put the prediction on record that it will be *double in five years.* It shows, therefore, that all who own real estate in and around St. Louis have only to sit still, with the blessed sensation of growing rich. The late financial crisis has caused a temporary check. Two immense hotels, commenced last year, are waiting in the embryo for the tide of returning prosperity. But neither these nor other great enterprises will have to wait long.

The resources of Missouri, which have scarcely begun to be developed, are inexhaustible; the Iron Mountain alone, which will be reached by railroad on the 1st of March next, is worth more to the State and to the world than all the gold fields in California. It contains iron enough—and that, too, almost in a state of purity—to supply all the building material 76 and railroad tracks of both hemispheres for a thousand years. The Iron Mountain is one of the wonders of the world. I regret I have not time to visit it. This vast lump of metal may have fallen from some other sphere millions of years ago. Who knows to the contrary? Will our scientific geologists please take a look at the anomaly, and tell us what it means?

Among the public buildings of St. Louis, the Custom-house, the Merchants' Exchange, the Court-house, and the Mercantile Library Building are all worthy of a visit. The latter institution has the finest rooms for lecturing and library purposes I have seen. The reading-room, adorned with paintings and statuary, is admirably arranged and conducted; and to the pleasant-faced President of the Association, a good-looking young bachelor merchant, your “fair correspondent” is particularly indebted for most assiduous and acceptable attentions. The newspapers of the city seem to be expanding with the place. They are all of the blanket-sheet dimensions; and the *Republican* , whose proprietors are coining money, is quite equal, superficially, if not editorially, to the New-York *Courier and Enquirer.*

The society of St. Louis, judging from what I saw at a wedding jam, is decidedly metropolitan, almost cosmopolitan. Many of the young ladies have been 77 educated in New-York, and at the bridal gathering, at which I had the pleasure of “assisting,” I met three or four opening flowers who had just graduated from M'me Oakhill's and M'me

Canda's, with all the airs and graces of those “model institutions.” One of these was pointed out as the greatest heiress of Missouri, worth more than her weight in gold, and pretty and accomplished besides. Her temporal as well as her eternal charms, (by the natural law of gravitation,) surrounded her with admirers. The mode of entertainment struck me as somewhat novel, as well as liberal and expansive. The bride is the only daughter of a distinguished lawyer; and, although his house is a very good-sized one, yet, wishing to accommodate the multitude of his friends, he *borrowed the use of the adjoining house* , and gave his guests the freedom of both. Still, as I have said, the party was a jam—a caution to crinoline—and the dancing was kept up vigorously until five o'clock in the morning. The bride was not beautiful, but bright-eyed and intelligent, and she went through her rôle with as much self-possession as though she had been married a dozen times. Many of the ladies were pretty, two or three were handsome. Nearly all, old and young, mothers and maidens, marred the effect of their symmetries, and hid the beauty of their 78 hair, by most elaborate and unartistic devices called “head dresses.” Take a look at Grecian statuary, ladies, and unartificialize yourselves in this particular. There is no ornament for the head of woman like the “natural glory” of a clean, soft, simply arranged head of hair. If I were a man, I should always feel as if I would like to put my hand on such a head, smooth it, pet it, kiss it, and ask a blessing on it. But a huge mass of braided conceits, stuck full of pins, ribbons, and artificial flowers, looking like a spread eagle in front, and a spread peacock behind, smelling of grease and curling-tongs-ugh!

But I must drop the subject, or I shall have my fair sisters pulling my own hair. So, with a good word for mine host of the “Planters” and their gentlemanly assistant, (whose kindness is *Felt* and acknowledged,) I betake myself to the Father of Rivers, (why not the Mother, the majestic receiver, and a *Missis* too?) and remain, Amphibiously yours, —.

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LETTER No. XIII.

Steamboat Philadelphia, *Mississippi River, Feb.* 11, 1858.

My Dear —:

“From rise of morn till set of sun I've seen the Mississippi run;”

And that, too, for four successive days; and we are still thirty-six hours from New-Orleans. My great regret in leaving St. Louis the hour I did (ten o'clock on Sunday morning), was, that it deprived me of the pleasure of accepting an invitation to dine with a gentleman residing a few miles out of town, who has one of the finest flower-gardens and conservatories in the United States.

Mr.—is a bachelor of immense wealth, who makes floriculture his specialty. The love and care which most men bestow on money and women this gentleman devotes to flowers and fruits. I sympathize with him in these simple and beautiful tastes; and yet, if I were a man worth three millions of dollars, I would have one sweet flower, of a higher species, to adorn my garden, who should be the morning, the evening, and the crowning glory of all. Not that I love nature less, but man the more.

It was a bright, balmy, beautiful morning when 80 we left the City of Steamboats; and the bells were ringing the people to church as the Philadelphia quietly slid from the levee. I had been on board the previous day (to inspect my coffin, as a friend suggested), and the gallant Capt. Wayne had booked me for the “bridal stateroom;” and although the fresh catastrophe of the “Col. Crossman” was the topic of general conversation, yet the stout-looking, capacious boat, and, above all, the capable and careful expression of the captain's face, dispelled all sensation of fear; and from that moment to this I have thought little of the perils of fire, fog, or flood.

The Philadelphia is a fine, fast boat, with accommodations for five hundred passengers; and we have only about fifty on board, and but one who has proved of special interest to the stranger. Just as we were leaving St. Louis, a young lady, petite and pretty, came On board, looking a little hurried, flurried, and worried. She was escorted by two gentlemen,

relatives, who placed her under the captain's care, requesting him to deliver her safely in Memphis. As there were no ladies among the passengers (excepting one mother with five children, and one at the breast most of the time), the friends of the young lady naturally sought my acquaintance, and introduced me to their fair charge. She proved to 81 be the daughter of a physician in Alabama, and had been passing several months on a visit to her relatives in St. Louis. Her passage had been taken on board another boat, in company with a party of female friends; but the boat left before the time advertised, and the poor child, longing for home, rushed on board the Philadelphia, thinking only of her mother, and regardless of the novelty of the situation in which she soon found herself; a young lady, an only daughter, a petted, timid child, only six months out of school, among utter strangers, and nervously apprehensive of disasters by fire and water, with no female friend or attendant, she was an object at once of sympathy and compassion. At first she afflicted herself with the pious thought that she had done a wicked thing to start on Sunday; and tried to atone for the wrong by spasmodic attempts to read the Bible. Then taking a miniature of an only brother from her pocket, whom she seemed to worship, would eagerly kiss it, as if their mutual love would insure her safety. The day was mild and benignant. I invited her to go out on the deck; and seating her between the poet Mackay and myself, we administered to her disturbed imagination such soothing restoratives as poetry and philosophy could command.

“We calmed her fears, and she was calm.”

82

And then our little bird, re-assured in heart and mind, that she would be protected from every danger, began to sing to us sweet home-songs—sad, sacred and sentimental—and thus the golden hours, on wings of melody, flew over us till evening. The music and the memories it awakened, hallowed both time and place. Suddenly the enchantment is broken, and all our tranquil joys are turned to anxious fears. Our sweet singer is taken violently ill, and her notes of melody are changed to cries of pain. Poor child! how severely she has suffered, and how plaintively she has moaned for a mother's presence and a

mother's care! For forty-eight sleepless hours I watched by her side, a thousand times compensated by her grateful looks and words, after each paroxysm of pain; and have had the satisfaction of leaving her in charge of a friendly family at Memphis, momently expecting the arrival of her father, almost entirely recovered; but not until she gave us, by way of a bumper at parting, “False Nellie Lorraine,” with a wail that is still ringing in my heart. My poet-companion, who is writing the “Rhyme of the River,” has made a beautiful allusion to the incident I have related, and embalmed our Alabama belle in poetry as beautiful as her own music, all of which will appear in due time in the columns of the Illustrated London News.

83

DOWN THE MISSISSIP. BY CHARLES MACKAY.

I.

'Twas a wintry morning, as the clock struck ten, That we left St. Louis, two dejected men — Gazing on the river, thick with yellow mud, And dreaming of disaster, fire, and fog, and flood— Of boilers ever bursting, of snags that break the wheel, And sawyers ripping steamboats, through all their length of Yet, on shipboard stepping, we dismissed our fears, [keel— And beheld through sunlight, in the upper spheres, Little cherubs, waving high their golden wings, Guarding us from evil and its hidden springs. So on Heaven reliant, thinking of our weans, Thinking of our true-loves, we sailed for New-Orleans; Southward, ever southward, in our gallant ship, *Floating, steaming, panting, down the Mississip.*

II.

Oh, the hapless river! in its early run Clear as molten crystal, sparkling in the sun; Ere the fierce Missouri rolls its troublous tide To pollute the beauty of his injured bride; Like a bad companion poisoning a life, With a vile example and incessant strife, So the Mississippi, lucent to the brim, Wedded to Missouri, takes her hue from him— And is pure no longer, but with sullen haste Journeys to the ocean—a gladness gone to waste. Thus our idle

fancies shaped themselves that day, Mid the bluffs and headlands, and the islets grey, Southward, ever southward, in our creaking ship, *Steaming through the ice-drifts down the Mississip.*

III.

In our wake there followed, white as flakes of snow, Seven adventurous seagulls, floating to and fro, Diving for the bounty of the bread we threw, Dipping, curving, swerving—fishing as they flew. 84 And in deep mid-current, throned upon a snag, Far away—a rover—from his native crag, Sat a stately eagle, Jove's Imperial bird, Heedless of our presence, though he saw and heard; Looking so contemptuous, that human nature sighed For a loaded rifle to slay him for his pride;— But superb, defiant; slowly, at his ease, Spreading his wide pinions he vanished on the breeze Southward, flying southward, far beyond our ship, *Floating, creaking, panting, down the Mississip.*

IV.

In a blaze of glory shone the sun that day, In a blaze of beauty, fresh as flowery May, A maid from Alabama came tripping on our deck— Bright as heaven above us,—pure without a speck— Singing songs till twilight, freely as the lark That for inner gladness sings though none may hark— Songs of young affection, mournful songs of home, Songs of happy sadness, when the fancies roam From th' oppressive Real to the fairy Far, Shining through the Future, silvery as a star; And the Sun departed in his crimson robe, Leaving Sleep, his viceroy, to refresh the globe; Thus we traveled southward in our gallant ship, *Floating drifting, dreaming, down the Mississip.*

V.

Brightly rose the morning o'er the straggling town, Where the broad Ohio pours its waters down To the Mississippi, rolling as before, Seeming none the wider for increase of store; And they said, “These houses, scattered on the strand, Take their name from *Cairo* in the

Eastern land, And shall be a city at some future day, Mightier than Cairo, dead and passed away.” And we thought it might be, as we gazed awhile;— And we thought it might not, ere we passed a mile— 85 And our paddles paddled through the turbid stream, As we floated downwards in a golden dream; Southward, ever southward, in our panting ship, *Idling, dawdling, loafing, down the Mississip.*

VI.

Sometimes in Missouri we delayed an hour, Taking in a cargo—butter, corn, and flour; Sometimes in Kentucky shipped a pile of logs, Sometimes sheep or turkeys, once a drove of hogs. Ruthlessly the niggers drove them down the bank, Stubbornly the porkers eyed the narrow plank, Till at length, rebellious, snuffing danger near, They turned their long snouts landward, and grunted out their fear, And the white-teethed niggers, grinning with delight, Rode them, and bestrode them; and charged them in the fight! And then came shrill lamenting, and agony and wail, And pummelling, and hoisting, and tugging at the tail, Until the swine were conquered; and southward passed our ship, *Panting, steaming, snorting, down the Mississip.*

VII.

Thus flew by the slow hours, till the afternoon, Mid a wintry landscape, and a sky like June; And the mighty river, brown with clay and sand, Swept, in curves majestic, through the forest land, And stuck into its bosom, heaving fair and large, Many a lowly cypress that grew upon the marge;— Stumps, and trunks, and branches, as maids might stick a pin, To vex the daring fingers that seek to venture in. Oh travelers! bold travelers! that roam in wild unrest, Beware the pins and brooches that guard this river's breast; 5 86 For danger ever follows the captain and the ship Who scorns the snags and sawyers that gem the Mississip.

VIII.

Three days on the river—nights and mornings three— Ere we stopped at Memphis, the port of Tennessee, And wondered why they gave it such name of old renown— A dreary, dingy, muddy, melancholy town, But rich in bales of cotton, o'er all the landing spread, And bound for merry England, to earn the people's bread—

IX.

Here our songster fled us, the little gipsy queen, Leaving us a memory of gladness that had been, And through the dark night passing, dark without a ray, Save the light we carried, we held upon our way: Darkness on the waters—darkness on the sky— Rain-floods beating o'er us, wild winds howling high— But, safely led and guided, by pilots who could tell The pulse of the river, its windings and its swell; Who knew its closest secrets by dark as well as light, Each bluff and fringing forest, each swamp or looming height— Its gambols, its caprices, its current's steady law, And at the fourth day dawning, we skirted Arkansaw; Southward, steering southward, in our trusty ship, *Floating, steaming, panting, down the Mississip.*

X.

Weary were the forests, dark on either side; Weary were the marshes, stretching far and wide; Weary were the wood-piles, strewn upon the bank; Weary were the cane-groves, growing wild and dank; 87 Weary were the tree-stumps, charred and black with fire; Weary was the wilderness, without house or spire; Weary were the log-huts, built upon the sand; Weary were the waters, weary was the land; Weary was the cabin, with its gilded wall; Weary was the deck we trod—weary—weary all— Nothing seemed so pleasant to hope for or to keep, Nothing in the wide world so beautiful as sleep, As we journeyed southward in our lazy ship, *Dawdling, idling, loafing, down the Mississip.*

XI.

Ever in the evening as we hurried by, Shone the blaze of forests, red against the sky— Forests burned for clearings, to spare the woodman's stroke, Cottonwood and cypress, and ash and giant oak— And from sleep upspringing—when the morning came, Seemed the lengthening landscape evermore the same, Evermore the forest and the rolling flood, And the sparse plantations and the fertile mud;— Thus we came to Princeton, threading countless isles; Thus we came to Vicksburg, thrice three hundred miles; Thus we came to Natchez, when the starlight shone, Glad to see it—glad to leave it—glad to hurry on — Southward, ever southward, in our laden ship, *Fuming, toiling, heaving, down the Mississip.*

XII.

Whence the sound of music? Whence the merry laugh? Surely boon companions, who jest, and sing, and quaff? No! the slave rejoicing;—happier than the free. With guitar and banjo, and burst of revelry! Hark the volleyed laughter! hark the joyous shout! Hark the nigger chorus, ringing sharply out. Merry is the bondsman! gloomy is his lord; For merciful is Justice and kind is Fate's award. And God, who ever tempers the winter to the shorn, Dulls the edge of Sorrow to these His lambs forlorn— 88 And gives them cheerful natures, and thoughts that never soar Into that dark To-morrow which wiser men deplore. So sing, ye careless negroes, in our joyous ship, *Floating, steaming, dancing, down the Mississip.*

XIII.

At the sixth day dawning all around us lay Fog, and mist, and vapour, motionless and grey; Dimly stood the cane-swamps, dimly rolled the stream, Bayou-Sara's housetops faded like a dream; Nothing seemed substantial in the dreary fog— Nothing but our vessel drifting like a log— Not a breath of motion round our pathway blew— Idle was our pilot, idle were our crew— Idle were our paddles, idle, free and slave— Everything was idle but the restless wave— Bearing down the tribute of three thousand miles To the Southern

Ocean and its Indian isles; Thus all morn we lingered in our lazy ship, *Dozing, dreaming, nodding, down the Mississip.*

XIV.

But ere noon, uprising, blew the southern breeze, Rolling off the vapor from the cypress-trees, Opening up the blue sky to the south and west, Driving off the white-clouds from the river's breast; Breathing in our faces, balmy, from the land, A roamer from the gardens, as all might understand; Happy as the swallows or cuckoos on the wing, We'd cheated Father Winter, and sailed into the Spring, And beheld it round us, with its sounds and sights, Its odors and its balsams, its glories and delights— The green grass, green as England; the apple-trees in bloom; The waves alert with music, and freighted with perfume— As we journeyed southward in our gallant ship, *Singing and rejoicing down the Mississip.*

89

XV.

On the seventh day morning we entered New-Orleans, The joyous “Crescent City”—a Queen among the Queens— And saw her pleasant harbor alive with tapering spars— With “union jacks” from England, and flaunting “stripes and stars;” And all her swarming Levée, for miles upon the shore, Buzzing, humming, surging, with Trade's incessant roar — With negroes hoisting hogsheads, and casks of pork and oil, Or rolling bales of cotton, and singing at their toil; And downwards—widening downwards—the broad majestic river, Hasting not, nor lingering, but rolling on forever. And here from travel resting, in soft ambrosial hours, We plucked the growing orange, and gathered summer flowers, And thanked our trusty captain—our pilot—and our ship— *For bearing us in safety down the Mississip.*

I shall not attempt to describe the majestic monotony of this mighty river—the sewer of a hundred cities—the grand alimentary canal of a continent. The vast valley through which it flows seems to me like a new creation; and its porous cottonwood forests, that line its

banks for a thousand miles, look like the arboreal experiments of nature, preparatory to more useful and ornamental production. The cities we have passed—Cairo, Memphis, Vicksburg and Natchez—disappoint me in size and appearance, and the scattered and ragged-looking cotton plantations wear a dreary, lonely aspect. Our captain, a fine-looking man, six feet four, who is both *gal* -lant 90 and gal- *lant* , has done all he could to make the trip a pleasant one, and his name-sake and clerk has been most gentlemanly and attentive. The fare has been good; and Hannah, the chambermaid, with her low, soft, sympathetic voice, most assiduous in her attentions. The principal entertainments have been afforded us by the variety of cargo taken in at the numerous landings; and among other “goods” a drove of hogs, which it took an army of darkies a couple of hours to persuade on board, afforded infinite fun. It was pig *vs.* nig., and such a grotesque struggle I have never seen. The gentlemen in the forward cabin have also had their own fun by playing off a practical joke upon “Jo,” the barkeeper. Jo is a good-looking wag, who is rather fond of playing good-natured “tricks upon travelers;” and the clerk of the boat has been watching an opportunity to pay him in his own coin, and this is the way the thing was done:—Among the live-stock on board there is a flock of nine hundred sheep, penned up as closely as they can stand. The clerk, complaining that he was liable to be cheated in the fare by a mis-count, proposed that the sheep should all be marked and numbered. The job was a difficult and a disagreeable one. Bat the ever ready and obliging Jo, volunteered for the task, and with brush and marking-pot 91 in hand, descended into the woolly mass, and proceeded to business. When he had got fairly at work, the captain tipped the wink to the passengers, and all went down to witness the performance. There stood Jo in the centre of the flock, with his coat-tails tucked up under his arms, his face at a red heat, and looking bewildered at the task before him, with a faint glimmering perception of the joke, that it would be just as difficult to count the sheep after they were marked as before. The party of spectators broke into a roar of laughter, and Jo looking a little “sheepish,” but taking the joke very good-naturedly, hurried out of the pen with all possible haste.

We have taken on board two small droves of negroes, one of ten, boys and girls, mostly the latter, bought in Richmond for a plantation near Vicksburg. They cost the owner, all expenses included, about ten hundred and fifty dollars a head. I asked the best-looking girl of the lot her name. She said it was Cinderella, (slaves, like the early Christians, have but one name,) and that her master had bought them for his own use. I asked what that meant, and she said to work on his plantation, and not to sell again. They all seemed perfectly satisfied with their emigration to Louisiana. Another lot of twenty were 92 taken on board lower down the river, and were on their way to the New-Orleans market to be sold, all except one, a mulatto girl, who seemed to be the traveling companion of the owner, and would return with him. One fellow became obstreperous, and had to be put in irons.

Among the objects of interest on the river, none excites more attention than the lowly mansion of Gen. Taylor, at Baton Rouge. It is a mere cottage, and a very humble one at that; but as the home of a President of the United States, it gives a historical character to the place, and the traveler watches for it with eager curiosity. From Baton Rouge to New-Orleans, a distance of over a hundred and twenty miles, the sugar plantations line both sides of the river, and the green fields, green trees, with here and there clumps of orange groves, rich in fruits and blossoms, make one feel that the people of Louisiana, like the cuckoo, need have

“No sorrow in their song, No winter in their year.”

We are now approaching the Crescent City and civilization; so, I'll put on a clean collar, a clean sh—, and get myself up generally for a presentable appearance at the St. Charles. Like the Irishman, 93 who wrote to his wife, and took it to her himself, in order to save postage, I shall hand you this without the intervention of any mail. Yours, and glad to be with you.

LETTER No. XIV.

St. Charles Hotel, New-Orleans, *February* 16, 1858.

My Dear —:

Three days of summer weather in the Crescent City, in the St. Charles Hotel, in a crowd of seven hundred and fifty strangers, representing every State, if not every city in the Union, and your “fair correspondent” finds herself “lost in wonder, love, and praise!” How shall I convince my Northern friends that while they are shivering over anthracite fires, we are walking the shady side of the streets in the thinnest shawls, or sitting at open windows inhaling the sweet and balmy breezes of the Gulf, redolent of roses and orange flowers! Verily—

“We have cheated Father Winter And sailed into the Spring.” 5*

Since Saturday I have not seen a cloud in the horizon, nor a fire in the grate; and last evening we all went to Thalberg's concert bare-headed, (some of us bare-necked,) in lace mantles or light opera cloaks.

And now that I have touched upon the concert, let me say it was a brilliant success. The great masters, Vieuxtemps and Thalberg, never acquitted themselves in a more masterly manner, although the latter was suffering under the pressure of sad news just received from home—the death of his father-in-law, Lablache. When encored, instead of playing one of his lively ittle pieces, he gave us “The Last Rose of Summer,” in notes of more touching pathos than I have ever heard from the chords of the piano. The sweet, lamenting tones moistened more than one pair of bright eyes near me; and then I thought of one sweet and lovely singer, now sleeping with the vanished flowers, who used to sing this exquisite melody in such a strain of delicious sadness, as to melt all hearts into pity for the poor “lone one,” left to “pine on the stem.” And this is the luxury of music: it touches every key of memory, and stirs all the hidden springs of sorrow and of joy. I love it for

what it makes me forget, and for what it makes me remember. But these are reflections. Let me confine myself to facts. What a fine hall for music is the “Odd 95 Fellows;” and what an elegant and discriminating crowd of listeners! There was no talking during the performances; no applauding out of place, and no inconsiderate and vociferous encoring. It was also a well-dressed audience. The gentlemen put on gloves, and the ladies showed their respect for art by getting themselves up in toilettes suitable to the occasion. At the opera, also, the other evening, I noticed that the ladies were carefully, richly, and generally tastefully dressed; and as the boxes are so arranged as to display almost the entire figure, the scene was very beautiful. From the gallery above, it was like looking down upon a bed of flowers. Speaking of the opera, M'me Colson, as *Marie* , in “La Fille du Regiment,” sang and acted her rôle admirably, and so did the personator of the *Sergeant.* The tenor was only so-so. But I am unintentionally running into the province of your musical critic [“Gemotice”], whose “opinions” of art and artists are regarded as standard authority throughout the United States.

To return to the St. Charles. This spacious hotel is a great and a “peculiar institution.” Just now it is excessively crowded, and its dining saloons and parlors look like Saratoga or Newport in the height of the season. The proprietors have their hands full, and find it difficult to bestow the constantly inflowing 96 tide of guests. The drawing-room, after dinner, presents a gay and festive scene. It is a congress of beautiful women; and I wish I could add, of fine-looking men also. But the truth will fully justify me in claiming for the softer sex of the South a decided superiority in looks, manners, cultivation, &c., &c. In a word, I should say this is a very paradise for accomplished cosmopolitan gentlemen in search of wives, either with or without fortune. I confess that I “cotton” to these fair, flush, impulsive, warm-hearted plantation women. They have an easy, complacent, luxurious, *dolce far niente* look, particularly attractive to one of refined epicurean proclivities. And with what a wealth of hair these magnificent women are crowned! It is as full and luxuriant as the foliage of their own forests. But, oh, how unartistically they dress it! What a forbidding deformity is a head of hair of the size of a bushel basket, stuck full of

pins, loaded down with braids (foreign hairs), festooned with flowers, and flaunting with rainbow-colored ribbons! I am delighted to know that the precepts and example of your “fair correspondent” have not been lost upon all the fair heads of your fair readers, and that several of the leading and loveliest belles of the St. Charles have, within a day or two, subdued their 97 tresses into natural bounds and Grecian simplicity. At the risk of being “persecuted in every city” by barbers, coiffeures, modistes, and importers of human hair from Switzerland, (where maidens are shorn like sheep to supply the Parisian and American market,) I shall continue to preach and practice simplicity of head dress until a new order of hairistocracy is established throughout the world.

“Whom have we at the St. Charles?” is a question that comes to me to-day in more than one letter from home. Of belles there are several; but I dare not name them. Kentucky, I think, in this particular, is “the banner State.” They are bright, exuberant, coquettish creatures, ever ready to confide the sweet secrets of their heart to a sympathetic ear, as the flowers are to yield their fragrance to the whisperings of the breeze. They are frank, generous, and joyous, and if you give them a kiss they will *give it right back again with interest.* [Of course I speak as a woman.]

Among the celebrities are Miss Charlotte Cushman and the poet Mackay. The former, the greatest actress on the stage, and one of the noblest women in the world; and the latter, the best of living poets—the Poet Laureate of the People. I have also met the magnificent “Rosa,” a sweet 98 Western poetess, and a woman of rare and sumptuous beauty, with a bust that a sculptor might worship but could not improve, and with eyes that may have been deepened, but not dimmed, by tears,

“As streams their channels deeper wear.”

And here I should close; but I cannot forbear complying with a friend's request to “set you right” on the Red Petticoat question, which is beginning to be discussed here; although

I believe that mine is the “only copy” in town. It is not true that the red petticoat was introduced into “good society” by the Queen of England.

During the Russian war it was announced in the English papers, by the correspondents of the Times, the Illustrated News, and others, that the favorite costume of the Russian peasants was a red petticoat; and that the Russian national melody was called the “Red Petticoat.” In 1856, the red petticoat suddenly made its appearance in England. It has long been worn in France, especially among the fish girls of Boulogne-sur-Mer, a favorite resort of the English in summer, and only twenty-four miles from the English coast. It is also worn by the fishwomen of New-Haven, near Edinburgh; and was introduced on the stage by Miss 99 P. Horton, in the character of a fishwoman. I should think that in Kentucky, where every other lady wears a crimson dress, the red petticoat would rage like wildfire. When coquettishly worn, it is decidedly picturesque and inflammatory.

But hear what Mackay says of the scarlet garment—who has done it up in verse, set it to music; and, in a few days, I suppose it will be as popular as a “campaign song:”

THE RED PETTICOAT.

I.

Oh, the red, the flaunting petticoat, That courts the eye of day, That loves to flare and be admired, And blinks from far away; It may delight the roving sight, And charm the fancy free; But if its wearer's half as bold, I'll pass, and let her be— With her red, her flaunting petticoat, She's not the girl for me!

II.

But the white, the modest petticoat, As pure as drifted snow, That shuns the gaze in crowded ways, Where follies come and go— It stirs the primrose on its path, Or daisy on

the lea; And if the wearer's like the garb, How beautiful is she! With her white, her modest petticoat, Oh, she's the girl for me!

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III.

But red or white, it matters not, If she be good and fair, Herself shall sanctify the garb It pleases her to wear. The red shall show her warmth of heart, And spirit frank and free— The blue her truth—the pink her love, The white her purity. If these her colors—these her charms— Oh, she's the girl for me!

LETTER No. XV.

St. Charles Hotel, New-Orleans, *February* 18, 1858.

My Dear —:

A budget of notes from the Picayune office, with several notelets mysteriously left in my room this morning, require a little notice; and, as they say in Congress, “rise to make an explanation.” I will not deny that some of these epistles are “love letters,” full of sentiment and bad spelling; but I am sorry to find that, as a general rule, the more extravagant the admiration, the more limping the orthography. As I cannot personally reply to all these communications, invitations, and propositions, let me use your columns for the purpose, in the first place, of giving a general answer to that Eve-like curiosity which asks 101 to lift the veil from the face of your fair “ *incognita.* ” “Who is Belle Brittan?” Is she a woman or a myth?” I can only answer in the words of the Irishman's echo, who came to the place of his youth and cried, “The friends of my youth, where are they?” And echo replied, “Really, I don't know!” Belle Brittan does not know herself (who does?) who she is, what she is, whence she came, or whither she's going. With the rest of the crowd, let her pass for what she seems. (Few are the Hamlets who can truly say, “I know not *seems.* ”) To the weak-headed anonymous gentlemen who solicit locks of hair, daguerreotype portraits,

old gaiters, &c., &c., let me say, once for all, that I have none to spare; and to the strong-minded sisterhood, who claim to have found in your “fair correspondent” an exponent of their own yearning hearts, ever longing to wreak themselves in print, let me say, that I am *not* a Bloomer, either outwardly or inwardly (I specially detest a woman who *pants* for notoriety), and think a woman cannot be too womanly, any more than a man can be too manly.

I am aware that the critics of the press, and the censors of manners, have sometimes accused me of indulging in expressions too masculine for my sex—that my letters are sometimes a little too Fanny 102 Ferny, or Lady Gay Spankerish. But the truth is, I have been a good deal in gentlemen's society, and now and then may have caught and used a word that is more forcible than feminine. Something must be pardoned to one's habit of life; if not to peculiarities of temperament. Henceforth I will be just as lady-like in my style as circumstances will permit. And yet, there is no use disguising the fact that women do sometimes feel an infinite relief in saying and doing strong things. An intense nature cannot always stop to “mince matters.” And now, having, as I trust, fully and forever unsatisfied the curiosity of the public, at the risk of being censured for egotism, (there is always somebody to censure us for something,) let me return thanks to a fair correspondent in Iberia (“had I, too, in Iberia dwelt!”), whose sweet sisterly letter, so delicate, tender, and womanly in its sympathies—so beautiful and poetical in its descriptions of the “Attakappas country”—so strongly and so hospitably persuasive in its invitations to “visit the country, to which the unfortunate lover of Longfellow's “Evangeline” fled—the country in which the descendants of Basil, the blacksmith, still live,” has almost thrown me off my track of travel, and tempted me into the beauteous wilderness, where

'Beautiful is the land with its prairies and forests of fruit trees, Under the feet a garden of flowers, and the bluest of heaven Bending above, and resting its dome on the walls of the forest.”

To the land where—

“The mocking bird, wildest of singers, Shakes from his little throat such floods of delicious music.”

Alas! the inexorable necessity that ever compels us to hurry on and away from these almost irresistible allurements, like the Alpine youth who pressed on and up through snow and ice, not even staying to rest his head upon the breast of the sweet-voiced maiden. My dear unknown “Creole,” I cannot come to you, in your flowery forest home, where I imagine you to dwell like Coleridge's

“Youthful hermitess, Beauteous in a wilderness;”

but will console myself with the hope that we may meet somewhere *further on.* To the request made in that important feminine appendage, the *Postscript* (always containing the uppermost thought, although last expressed), I say—yes, with all my heart.

And this, by the way, reminds me that I should add a P. S. to my little historical sketch of the introduction of the red petticoat. In the countries where 104 it is worn, during “Leap Year,” the maiden in the crimson skirt may pop the question to her favorite swain, and if he is ungallant enough to refuse her his hand, the custom of the country compels him to console her with the present of a new silk dress. When this “law of society” shall be adopted here, won't we girls risk the question, once in four years, for the sake of the garment, if not for the bride-groom!

I was just “coming to a close,” in a desperate hurry, to have a peep at the beaux in the parlor, when up comes another note, signed “Edwin,” blowing me up for “overpraising the Kentucky belles!” I have only to say, the thing can't be done. I make no comparisons, but still persist in saying, that in the great and glorious staples of whisky and women, old

Kentucky can't be beat. If I were a bachelor in search of a wife—well, I don't say what I would do.

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LETTER No. XVI.

Mobile, *February* 26, 1858.

My Dear —:

Did any of your readers (or mine) ever turn their backs upon one they loved? Yes, for it is one of the commonest, and one of the hardest trials of life. Separation is a terrible thing; but it is the dark gulf we all must cross; and it's no use to “linger, shivering on the brink.” The child must leave its mother; the bride her childhood's home; the lover “the maid whom his bosom holds dear;” and, finally, we all must leave *all* , and go alone with our memories into the land of—the great Perhaps!

I left New-Orleans, the city of the Sun (and of the Soul), heavily freighted with regrets; and my heart *rode backwards* all the way to Mobile. Nine delightful days (and glorious nights), with not a cloud by day to obscure the golden light of the sun; not a speck by night to dim the silver radiance of the crescent moon; in an atmosphere as soft as a New-England June, and redolent of roses and orange blossoms; where, as Byron says,

“The sky is so clear and purely beautiful That God alone is to be seen in heaven;”

and my heart had been won by the very elements 106 of the place, to say nothing of the kindness and hospitality of the people. From the moment the gracious, gentlemanly, and gallant proprietors of the St. Charles received me with a tropical “smile” that penetrated to my heart (thence ascending and radiating in gentle waves of joy about the brain), until they placed in my hands a parting benediction (two bottles of “the spirit of '76”), every moment of my sojourn calls for an emotion of special gratitude.

But as I have not time for a “bill of particulars,” like Franklin, who asked a blessing on the entire barrel of pork, I must return thanks in a word to all—“debtor to sundries.” To the “Mistick Krewe,” for anonymous invitations to their unique, mysterious, mythological, and most entertaining “entertainment;” to the young and princely bachelor millionaire, for a look at his fine paintings, fast horses, convivial friends (“jolly companions, every one”), &c., &c.; to several gallant, but ungodly men of the North, who (mistaking my character) invited me to see a cock-fight on Sunday, and a market for the sale of black boys and girls of all sizes, who all begged me to buy them, recommending themselves as waiters, nurses, hair-dressers, &c., &c., in the most extravagant terms; to the great masters, Thalberg and 107 Vieuxtemps, whose visit happened so *apropos;* to Charlotte Cushman, the wonderful artiste and glorious woman, whose personal acquaintance is an event in any one's lifetime; and, last and most of all, to the ladies and gentlemen of the “St. Charles”—young and old, married and single. In view of all the kind things done, said, proposed, and promised, I am crushed beneath a mountain of obligations; and, as Hamlet says, “beggared even in thanks.”

But in this strain of retrospective dalliance I may not publicly indulge. It is too much like squeezing hands and kissing “before folks.” By the way, what universal kissers these Southern women are. I mean among themselves, of course. In the drawing-room of the St. Charles there is one continual shower of these soft, insipid, inter-feminine kisses. At first I was tempted to exclaim, behold, how these women love each other! but soon learned that it was one of the customs of the country, meaning little, if anything more than a bow, a hand-shake, or a “how are you?” For my part, I will frankly confess, that I much prefer to kiss a goblet of Catawba, a clean baby, or one of “ *the opposite sex* ” to mingling lips and breaths with the handsomest of my own. And yet, I could name an exception or two of women with cherry lips, polished teeth, and rose-geranium 108 odors, whose sweet mouths an angel of heaven might sigh to kiss, especially if the said angel, like one or two I know, appeared in boots and pantaloons.

Just before leaving Paradise, I received a long letter, without a signature, written in a delicate, graceful, lady's hand, discussing the society of St. Charles in a free, feminine, philosophical manner, too good to be lost. Who could have written it? I am utterly in the dark as to the writer's identity; and yet, suspicion hovers between a matron and a maid who can boast that a pure tide of historical blood flows richly in their veins. (“Blood will tell.”) Let me give an extract of true womanly feeling and criticism:—

St. Charles Hotel, *February* 20, 1858.

Dear, charming, fluent, piquant Belle Brittan, you sprightly compound of man and woman. In my distant country home, amid the roses and magnolia vales of the fairest portion of this our sunny South, the echoes of your fame had reached me and awakened a thousand pleasant emotions within my own breast. Your vivid description of people and things, wit and sentiment exquisitely blended, woman's piquancy with man's deeper thought, all found a response in my heart, and excited a lively curiosity to see the fair (?) writer, for And now how I should enjoy a nice, long, loving talk, within view of the crowd, yet removed from its din—a quiet conversation far above the staple of every day commonalities and parlor frivolities. Now don't deem me a sentimentalist, in the usual acceptation of the word, nor a bold, *fast* woman. I am not making love to you. I would not dare address you thus face to face; but, through the medium of pen and paper, can I not tell you 109 some of the thoughts that are crowding my brain and swelling my heart, and dive a little deeper into things than the minions of fashion, who hit them upon the surface and play with the bubbles?

And apropos of fashion, what do *you* think of it generally? and more especially the female devotees—those gay butterflies, fluttering through the gaudy parlors of this temple of fashion and folly! Think you that a really genuine heart beats beneath the folds of each gorgeous silk or velvet; or that many ideas have birth within those heavily laden (externally) heads? Is there a soul there? I doubt it. Not but that each fair one has her peculiar affections to a degree, and some little warmth about the region anatomically

denominated the heart. For example: a fashionable wife has a husband; likes him well enough; he is a good sort of man; foots the bills, and asks no questions. Or, a gay widow, with several *et ceteras* , really is very fond of them, but they are much better at home; morals would be contaminated at a hotel, (*entre nous* , they would scare off the beaus). Then, a mincing, simpering, flirting young lady has a beau, her own especial favorite, him whom she allows to squeeze her hand the longest—who accompanies her oftenest to the theatre, concert, or what not. She has half said *yes* , but won't decide, though he really has “such sweet eyes;” and she believes she will marry him, *if she can't do better!* What a heterogeneous mass is here assembled; what a conglomeration of follies; what a variety of animals in the human menagerie!

And not only our sex, but the men. Vain, flattering, light, deceptive, empty (pockets as well as heads), coxcombish fellows, that are to be seen here! Look at that *veni, vidi, vici* specimen, as he pauses at the door, levels his glass at a dress (not the wearer in it), pronounces it stylish, pretty; addresses some trifling words to a feminine; to an indifferent question gives a worse answer; then saunters on to utter the same vapid nonsense to some other belle, and rehearse the same parody upon the noblest enjoyment of life —social and intellectual intercourse between the sexes. “Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness!” sigh I, rather than a palace in a world peopled by such bipeds. Give me but a small circle of earnest natures, whose warmth of manner is not the exuberance of vanity, or the effervescence of wine, but the natural outpouring of a candid nature; whose professions are sincere; and 6 110 whose souls, purified from the dross of worldliness, are alive to nobler aims than the pursuit of fashionable folly.

With this admirably written and most suggestive criticism, I will fold my sheet, and save Mobile as a postscript to this. To confess the honest truth, I am not yet entirely here; although body, trunk, &c., are snugly bestowed in the “Battle House.” I cannot yet decide whether I have acted more like a fool or a heroine, in resisting all those plantation

invitations. The beautiful and classic pleadings of the fair Iberian Creole, are almost as irresistible as the song of the Lurelei in the legend of the Rhine.

Recedingly yours.

P. S.—Love to New-Orleans in general; and to—, to—, and to—in particular.

LETTER No. XVII.

Steamer St. Charles, Alabama River, *February* 28, 1858.

My Dear —:

When a celebrated French philosopher asked a celebrated French philosophress if, in her opinion, the woman ever lived whose virtue was impregnable, she naively and wisely answered, " *c'est selon.* " This is 111 my reply to the question: Is the trip from New-Orleans to Mobile a pleasant one? Five years ago, when I crossed the placid lake in company with a handsome and gallant New-York gentleman, with no regrets behind me, and all my hopes before me—(I was younger then)—Pontchartrain was sleeping serenely in the lovely, lustrous moonlight, and the voyage was fairy-like and beautiful. But now, how changed! The winds and waves were tumultuous, and there was neither moon nor star-light to relieve the darkness resting upon the face of the deep. It was a wild, rough night, and the "Cuba" was rudely buffeted; but, thanks to my stars, (and stomach,) I was able to preserve my equilibrium, although the demon of sea-sickness was madly rioting among the crowd of passengers.

On leaving the wharf, my attention was attracted by an act of sentimental gallantry worthy of notice. A tall young gentleman, whose face and name are familiar to the guests of the St. Charles, stood, like a statue, at the end of the pier, holding aloft a snowy handkerchief, which "fluttered in the breeze," until both the flag and the flag-staff were lost in the distance. This compliment *might* have been intended for one "whom modesty forbids

me to mention;" but truth compels me to add, that a fair Mobile belle sat 112 leaning over the rail of the vessel, looking very sadly and very earnestly at the fading figure so pertinaciously "seeing her off." The pale beauty looked still paler half an hour afterwards, as she staggered to her stateroom and called for the chambermaid—and a basin! Love is no antidote for sea-sickness; but it is a question if sea-sickness is not an antidote for love—temporary one, at least.

At half-past ten o'clock A. M., the next day, we landed at Mobile—a pleasant cotton city of some thirty thousand inhabitants—where the people live in cotton houses and ride in cotton carriages. They buy cotton, sell cotton, think cotton, eat cotton, drink cotton, and dream cotton. They marry cotton wives, and unto them are born cotton children. In enumerating the charms of a fair widow, they begin by saying she makes so many bales of cotton. It is the great staple—the sum and substance of Alabama. It has made Mobile, and all its citizens. Next to the cotton interest, the accomplished Madame Levert is the "peculiar institution," and particular attraction of the place—a rare and radiant woman, who embodies and expresses in her charming person the richness, sweetness, brightness, and exuberance of the sunny South. Long before the arrival of the boat, her servant was waiting at the wharf with a warm note of welcome, 113 in a rose-tinted envelope, inviting your "fair correspondent" to her pleasant and hospitable home. The room in which "Lady Emeline," Mrs. Bremer, and many other "world-noted women," had rested and written, was, as they say in Spain, "at my disposition"—the water in the pitchers, and a magnificent bouquet of garden roses on the table. And here I might dwell upon the thoughtful kindness, the delicate considerations, the artistic surroundings, that lend a nameless grace to the poetic home of this warm-hearted, noble-minded woman. But I will not. Let the sweet sanctuary of domestic life be forever veiled from the gaze of an unsympathizing world, and the fire-side of the gifted in heart and soul be as sacred from intrusions as the bridal-room of joy, or the darkened chamber of sorrow.

And here, too, I was delighted, and yet startled, to meet my old friend, "John Phenix," one of the wittiest of, wits and most genial of gentlemen. Poor fellow! He has been very ill,

with an obliquity of vision that sees everything double; and that, too, upon a strictly cold water regimen! But he is better now; and although unable to read or write, (a great loss to himself and to the world,) his conversation is an exhilarating stream of humor; and his sparkling spirits are as good as a tonic. In body he 114 is fifty pounds lighter than when I saw him last summer at the North; and, strange to say, his heart seems to have grown “light” in proportion. “Phenix” is a brick, with all the corners on; and I commend his health to the prayerful consideration of all genuine lovers of innocent fun. Never shall I forget the fast drive he gave me behind his beautiful grey “Black Hawk,” through the blooming “outskirts” of Mobile. But “Phenix” is married, his wife is handsome and healthy, and his little ones are springing up like daisies. I don't know that I ever knew a really lovable man who wasn't married, and whose wife was not diligently endeavoring to outlive him. Inexorable fate!

The Battle House is one of the very best hotels in the Union—a Southern institution with Northern principles, and a sweet little bit of domestic “sentiment” recently added, in the shape of the proprietor's lovely and accomplished bride. But the whistle of the St. Charles is blowing me away, and to linger is to be left.

The steamer is crowded; every room, berth, and cot taken. Confusion of voices, confusion of baggage, confusion of faces, and confusion of feelings. Here is a lone woman, looking disconsolate, in a dark dress and red shawl; with something in her 115 face that inclines me towards her. I shall make her acquaintance before our two days' journey is ended. I have already done it. She is a New-Yorker—young, lovely; and but six months married. I have learned her story—every woman has a story—it is interesting; but I may not tell it. And there is another New-York lady—young, handsome, and thoroughly cosmopolitan in style, manner; and conversation—leading her invalid husband by the hand, who is also young, rich, but almost blind. Sad for both; and sad for all who have eyes to see—and to lose. And we have among us a lady who sings divinely—a blessed relief from the dull monotony of the river, the Kansas talk of the men, and the smaller talk of the women; and thus we pass the forty long hours, with bad sleeping, bad eating, and worse drinking, and

reach Montgomery at noon on Sunday. And now, in a bath and a bed, in a clean sh—and clean sheets, I hope to find a great refreshment. With hair down, hoops off, strings loose, and feet in slippers, Wearily, yours, ——

P. S.—A woman's letter is never complete without a postscript, which is sometimes added as a sort 116 of snapper to the whip. Now it occurs to me, I will just drop a hint for the benefit of ladies in general, and one or two fair ones in particular. In a certain gay drawing-room, a certain young lady made a systematic attempt to play the part of a belle; and, as the opera critics say, made a most successful *fiasco.* It was like the showy poppy, with its gaudy colors and high odor, assuming to be a rose, and demanding the homage and admiration due to the queen of flowers. Moral: The beauty, grace, and *esprit* , which constitute the indescribable fascinations of the belle can never be counterfeited. Again, at a certain *table d'hôte* , lined with the beauty and fashion of the South, my eyes were caught by a sweet little woman, one of the fairest and most fairy-like of her sex; and, while sipping her soup, I thought her perfectly lovely; but, lo! when the fish came, she thrust a broad-bladed knife into her little rose-bud of a mouth, in the most dangerous and disenchanting manner! I never dared look at her again at table. It must have been a horror like this which made Byron hate to see a woman eat.

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LETTER No. XVIII.

Pulaski House, Savannah, *March* 9, 1858.

My Dear —:

Since leaving Mobile I have not found your “Sunny South” particularly sunny. The weather has been as capricious as a coquette, and a great deal colder. March came in wintry and blustering, and I have pitied the poor, precocious, confiding roses, that have bared their sweet and tender bosoms to its biting breath. It seems as if the seasons are getting shuffled a little out of place; there is a misdeal somewhere, and the days due in January

have got into the pack for March. At Montgomery, we found the weather cold; the hotel cold; everything cold but the wine, the water, and the women. The latter (of our party) were New-Yorkers, and as warm as furs and friendship could make them. As for the champagne, there was no ice to be had, and the bottles had evidently been kept in the warmest corner of the cellar. And there were no bells in the rooms, and not half covering enough on the beds. How you Southerners would scold to receive such treatment at the New-York or the St. Nicholas as we travelers have to put up with at Montgomery, 6* 118 at Macon, and, with two or three exceptions, at all the hotels throughout the Southern country. And yet they charge the highest rates; and, instead of “weak fish and strong tea,” generally reverse the order, and give you strong fish and weak tea.

As an illustration of the indifference to the wants of guests, I give the following:—We arrived at the “first hotel” in a certain city at about ten o'clock at night, in the regular train of cars, at the regular hour. We were a party of four, ladies and gentlemen, weary, cold, and hungry. The landlords, clerks, and all the servants were up, and yet they could give us nothing to eat or drink. The only alternative was to go out to an eating-house (where they said it was not proper for ladies to go), and order a supper sent to the hotel. Of course an extra price had to be paid for it. And here, too, one of the party, a lady who had recently returned from a tour in Europe, lost a trunk containing all her choice dresses—a huge trunk, with her name printed on it in full in large letters. It was taken, with a lot of other baggage, from the cars to the hotel, and thence mysteriously disappeared. The lady was on her way to Washington, and her loss is one with which the ladies, at least, can keenly sympathize. But she bore it like a philosopher and a Christian.

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A truce, however, to grumbling. For myself, I have little cause to complain, and only mention these incidental annoyances for the benefit of those who come after. These reminders of Southern hotel incommodations may, however, serve to moderate the complaints of Southern guests, who sometimes express dissatisfaction with all Northern institutions, not even excepting our magnificent hotels. The trip on the Alabama river, I

ought to add, has not been improved by the monopoly of the line. The rate of fare has been raised, and the “bill of fare” lowered. In all my recent journey of four thousand miles, I have nowhere met with so poor a table as on board “the crack steamer”—the St. Charles. Competition here would be a public benefit. Where's Commodore Vanderbilt?

Savannah disappoints me. Its beauties have been over-praised. Like a belle, with an “established reputation,” everybody acknowledges her charms, without stopping to analyze them. It is a sandy, silent, stagnant city, and almost as “finished” as the town of St. Albans, in England, where there has not been a house built in a quarter of a century. True, its streets are wide, and full of trees, but the grass grows in them, and Venice itself can scarcely be more still and lazy. With a population of some thirty thousand, 120 there seems to be less human oxygen in the atmosphere than sparkles in a Northern village of a year's growth. But there are some fine people here. Sneed, the journalist; Padelford, the merchant; Tefft, the autograph collector; Hodgson, the scholar; Locke, the cosmopolitan; and Pierpont, the preacher, are “regular bricks,” who perfume the place with pleasant associations. And there is a famous cemetery here, which I am yet to see—a beautiful city of the dead, that is said to be far more attractive (and which will soon be much more populous) than the city of the living. A friend is about to call and take me there, but not, I trust, in the sable omnibus that never brings a passenger back.

P. S.—I am told I am wrong about the *statu quoness* of Savannah. The population has doubled since 1840, and it is growing slowly, surely, and substantially.

LETTER No. XIX.

Pulaski House, Savannah, *March* 11, 1858.

My Dear —:

The allusion to the beautiful cemetery of “Buenaventura,” with which I closed my last letter, conveys 121 a wrong impression. It is not a public burial-place, but the private property of

Mr. Wiltberger, the proprietor of the Pulaski House—a very good hotel, by the way, which takes its name from the heroic Pole who fell gallantly in defending the city from the British, and not, as the Honorable Miss Murray so carelessly states, from the ill-fated steamer of that name.

I cannot hope to convey by means of words any adequate idea of the strange, solemn, mysterious beauty of Buenaventura; nor express the new sensations there awakened. It is situated about four miles from the city, and the road runs through a forest of pines, from whose ever-green tops the wind breathes an eternal sigh—one of the saddest sounds in nature. The grounds reserved by the will of the former owner to burial purposes, consist of some seventy acres, covered with live-oaks of immense size, growing in rows, so near as to meet in arches overhead, representing the long, dim aisles of an immense minster. But these trees are unlike any other trees, being veiled and shrouded in plumes and pendants of moss, swaying slowly and gracefully in the air, like the drooping banners of the dead. The effect is indescribable The forest looks ghostly—as if the morning mist were caught and 122 crystalized into a sort of palpable drapery, or like moonlight condensed into tangible, feathery robes, or like smoke-wreaths, fastened and festooned to every limb, in fantastic frills and folds and ruffles. And oh, how still the place! I could hear my own heart beat.

A white tomb here and there rises, to remind us that the dead are sleeping in this silent sanctuary; and the spirit of repose which pervades the place becomes absolutely fascinating to the world-weary heart. I remembered, sympathizingly, the story of the clergyman who, longing for rest, committed suicide here a few years ago, in the hope of being buried in its peaceful shades. He came alone, and was smitten with the beauty of death. The friendly river ran smiling by, and he plunged in to rest. For me, there was added to the gentle gloom, the sweet sadness of “Buenaventura,” a personal interest, a mournful charm, I did not expect to find. A friend, whom I had known and loved from childhood—a warm-hearted, generous, noble friend—here sleeps his last sleep; and

many an eye will moisten with memories of the past as it gazes upon the name of Charley Arnold.

Savannah improves upon acquaintance. I have seen a few pretty women; met several agreeable 123 gentlemen, and tasted some fine wines. The Fifth Avenue of the city bears the unattractive name of “Bull street” and crosses half-a-dozen little oval “Squares,” which pedestrians pass through, but which carriages pass around. The churches are numerous, especially the “colored churches;” but without pretension to architectural beauty, with one exception, and that has a spire one never tires of looking at. Willis, finically, compared it to an “ever-pointed pencil;” but to my eye, it is a perfect *ever-pointed spire* , and nothing else.

The Custom-House is a fine granite building, which is also used as a Post-Office. Banks are plenty, and during the late panic they stood magnanimously by the merchants, renewing their notes, and thus preventing catastrophes. Neither in Savannah nor Charleston has there been a single failure worth mentioning.

Thus far, in my rambling notes, I have not touched upon the “peculiar institution” and ticklish subject of slavery; but I can no longer refrain from expressing the opinion I have long entertained, and which has now settled into a conviction, that the master is a far greater sufferer under the system than the slave. This latter, so far as my observations have extended, is everywhere well cared for, well-treated, 124 and not overtasked. I have not yet seen one unhappy-looking negro in the South, and have heard but one cross word uttered by a master to a slave.

I have witnessed more unkindness, more suffering, more inhumanity, in the city of New-York, in one day, than I have seen in the South in three months. In fact I have seen here no suffering at all; no evidences of hunger, or cold, or destitution, or wretchedness, of any description, among the blacks. The malignant philanthropy of the Northern Abolitionists is utterly wasted in their dolorous clamor over the “miseries of the poor slave.” They know nothing of the practical workings of the system they are so noisy and mischievously

berating. But the rabid abolitionist is not a whit more contemptible than the opposite extremist, (a specimen of whom has been exhibiting his ears in one of the Savannah papers, over the signature of “Cambridge,”) who are so madly intolerant of free opinions, that they would persecute a man for even privately entertaining a theoretical antagonism to slavery. It is a pity that every such Southern jackass could not be voted to a Northern abolition jenny, and the twain be made to do the most menial work of the niggers, and take their stripes if they “kick in harness.”

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LETTER No. XX.

Mills's House, Chareston, *March* 14, 1858.

My Dear —:

“As the crow flies,” the distance from Savannah to Charleston is less than a hundred miles; but as the steamers run (inside route) it is a slow, circuitous journey of twenty seven-hours. And such a voyage! Navigation through a cane-brake, where the river creek, or ditch, or whatever its name, is often apparently narrower than the steamboat; and the “hands” have to “work her along” by thrusting long poles into the oozy banks, occasionally going ashore to “make fast” to boards driven into the mud, in order to “raise a purchase,” and wind the vessel off with the windlass. The progress was tedious; but the scene was amusing. To see Capt. Brittan, of the steamship Jason, straining away at the pushing poles with a group of red-shirted negroes, made Mackay's eye for the picturesque twinkle with delight; and I am not sure but we may soon see a spirited sketch in the Illustrated News, entitled “Working a passage on board the St. Mary's.”

We had but few passengers; and, besides your “fair correspondent,” only one lady, who was made 126 the most of. There were only two books on board: the Bible, and Grayson's “Hireling and Slave.” After reading the latter, which is really a very vigorous poem, to come from a novice of three-score and ten, (his “maiden effort,” I believe,) I betook myself to the

former, a very popular, but not very well understood publication; and tried to bring to its familiar pages an “inquiring mind and an undertanding heart.” So I took it up as if it were a volume just issued from the press, and sent to me “with the compliments of the author,” to read and “notice.” Beginning at the beginning, I endeavored to forget the comments of the commentators, and the interpretations of the priests. And my first objection is against the limited time—the “six days” of the Creation. I believe this planet is as old as Eternity; that matter always was, and always will be; and that annihilation is an impossibility. All things change; nothing is destroyed. When it comes to the account of the creation of Man, I find the whole story of the Garden of Eden a beautiful allegory, which satisfied the ignorant masses, who questioned too seriously touching the origin of the human race. So I am inclined to think we have ascended from the tadpole, rather than descended from Adam; or, as Agassiz believes, from four or five Adams. Then of 127 Moses, the foundling—the Washington of the Jews. In order to inspire obedience, and to establish an absolute control over his people, he issued his mandates under the awful sanction of the Jewish Jehovah; beginning and ending his orders with—“Thus saith the Lord.” Moses was a great leader as well as a wise law-maker; and understood the secret of managing the people. In order to inspire reverence and admiration for the priests, he ordered a magnificent robe to be made for Aaron, begirt with gems and jewels, and richly trimmed with gold. We still see the semblance of the “ephod;” and they who wear it assume peculiar sanctity and authority.

But this will never do. I am departing from the traditions of the elders, and the priests will be after me with a sharp stick. Leaving Moses in Egypt, let us come down to Charleston —a very pleasant city of about 60,000 inhabitants, all told; but looking as if it contained twice that number. As yet, I have seen but little, except a throng of well-dressed Africans going to and from church; and a charming citizen, by the name of *Mure* , one of the leading merchants of the city. How pleasant everything looks in the presence of an intelligent, agreeable companion! And here let me drop a word of advice 128 *pro bono publico:* and that is, *never travel alone.* It is a sad business. If not convenient to roam the world with the one you love best, (and it seldom is,) select the wittiest, wisest, and best-tempered

friend you have, to accompany you; and in such society every pleasure will be doubled, and every annoyance diminished. But to wander about alone—desolate and dreary—a stranger in a strange city—is more wearisome than the life of a Sing Sing student—“hard labor and close confinement.”

This is another digression. The truth is, I am rather hard up for a subject, having as yet seen little that is letterable but niggers. A young lady in the drawing-room has been rhapsodizing for the last half hour over a colored Sunday school she has just visited. “There were a hundred children; and the first ladies of Charleston were their teachers!” A fact not to be found in “Uncle Tom's Cabin.” These negroes run to religion like ducks to water; and every little darkey that can speak an intelligible lingo, is brim full of hymns and catechism. Formerly the slaves were nearly all of the Methodist “persuasion;” but the Baptists, with their palpable and sanitary dogma of immersion, are bringing these colored lambs into their folds “like clouds and droves to their windows.” The negroes can understand the 129 purification of baptism; and it is a great pity that the “rite” is not enforced as a daily duty. Who will start a new religion—the religion of cleanliness? John the Baptist must precede Jesus.

LETTER No. XXI.

Richmond, *March* 20, 1858.

My Dear —:

Like the little urchin, who offered as an excuse for not knowing his lesson that he “hadn't got the hang of the new schoolhouse” so my stay was too short in Charleston to enable me to catch the spirit of the place, or to see much, or say much of the city and its citizens. I am told it is one of the most aristocratic cities in the Union, and that the society is very select, and, consequently, very refined and cultivated. The planters and the merchants take things easy, and their wives and daughters still more so. Nobody seems to be in a hurry to go to bed, or to get up, or to go to work. Time is not counted as money, and days

and minutes are not coined into dollars and cents. It is, emphatically, a slow city—slow in its growth, slow in its movements, slow in its hotels, slow in its men, slow in its women, slow in its wines. Nobody 130 gets run over in its streets, nobody gets “run down” in its newspapers. The busiest gentleman finds time to lunch and lounge at the “club,” and the ladies an infinite deal of leisure to drive or saunter in the streets, and to indulge in their idlest caprices at home. In a word, the Charlestonians seem to take things very coolly, and never suffer themselves to get into a vulgar perspiration, except on the subject of politics.

How unlike the hurry-scurry life of the North. There we have not time enough to eat or to sleep; not time enough for work, and none for play; scarcely time enough to be born, or to die, decently. Even our funerals are hurried; and our hearse-horses are fast trotters! What a luxury is “an elegant leisure.” And this, I suppose is the secret of the Southern aristocracy. Surely it is not mere money; we have an abundance of that element in the North. But the more we have the more we want. And so we rush on to gather the golden harvest, not yet ready to stop, wash hands, fix ourselves up generally, and devote the fleeting hours to refinement and cultivation. Is it ancient blood, or beauty, or talent, or knowledge, that creates a social aristocracy? Our “first families” are as old at the North as at the South; our women are as beautiful, and our men as 131 learned and as gifted. But we are all in a vulgar hurry, and scramble after something, too often desperately industrious in idle and aimless pursuits, with no blessed leisure for love, or hope, or joy, or even grief. Bachelors haven't time to marry, husbands haven't time to pet their wives, while the women, especially of the fashionable class, “have no time for nothing.” A little less haste would be decidedly more graceful and agreeable. The Spaniards say, “God is never in a hurry.”

A large proportion of the citizens of Charleston are plantation proprietors, who vibrate between town and country as it suits their tastes, independently of business considerations. And these wealthy patriarchical planters are quite princely and Oriental in their hospitalities. They have not only ample time and means to devote to the entertainment of strangers, but find sufficient compensation for their generosity in the

society that breaks the monotony and dissipates the *ennui* of their leisure lives. It is pleasant enough to feel that one has hundreds of acres of growing rice and cane, and corn and cotton, but it is tiresome to walk or ride through the same grounds, day after day, to see it grow. So the planter always delights to have a fresh, intelligent companion at his side, who sees the operations of 132 the fields and the mills with new eyes; and to whom he is happy to explain the processes of planting, cultivating, and harvesting the sugar, the weed, or the grain.

I had not been an hour in the city before Gen. Gadsden called with an invitation to visit his rice plantation on the Cooper River, about twenty-five miles from town. We left in the cars at three o'clock, and in an hour reached the depot upon the estate, where a carriage waited to take us some four miles to the mansion of the proprietor. And here the venerable and excellent Gen. Gadsden, whose name is honorably associated with the treaty which settled all the difficulties between the United States and Mexico, lives like a fine old Southern gentleman, all of the good old time. A long and gracefully curving avenue of live-oaks leads to the fine large house (built some twenty years ago to please a Boston bride), with a beautiful flower garden in front, and a rich kitchen garden in the rear—the one giving a sweet and smiling welcome, and the other abundant assurance of more substantial cheer. Sitting down to a sumptuous dinner at five, we lingered over the “feast of reason” and the flow of bowl and soul, until the clock told the hour for retiring. What a stilly night; and what a deep, 133 delicious, oblivious sleep! At early dawn, the “feathered songsters of the grove” began their matins, led by the “mocking bird, wildest of singers.” I lay and listened to their lay in a semi-somnolent, dreamy delirium of delight. The melodious jargon still lingers in my ear, like the music in the sails of the Ancient Mariner,

“Which still kept on A pleasant noise till noon, A sound as of a hidden brook In the leafy month of June.”

After breakfast we drove to the rice fields, and then walked around them, a distance of some three miles, to witness the system of planting. Gen. Gadsden's estate consists of

about twenty-five hundred acres, but only a small portion of it is suitable for the cultivation of rice. These grounds border on the river, and must be overflowed as soon as planted, and then twice afterwards before the crop is ripened. They are as level and as flat as a prairie, and it needs no argument to prove that none but negroes can live in working them. The African, like the black snake, is sun-proof. The rice is sown in shallow trenches, lightly covered with earth. The sowing and all the lightest work is done by the women, although they are said to be better hoers 7 134 than the men. Upon this estate there are two hundred slaves, all looking well-fed, well-clothed, and well-contented with their lot. In passing the “nursery,” some sixty little black birds came out to see us. They were from twelve years old down, to perhaps as many days, and all the older ones held younger ones in their arms. It was a picture of sable infantry worth seeing, and hearing, too, for the way they sung about “Sweet Canaan,” and other heavenly hopes and homes, would have done credit to an upper-ten Sunday-school in the most aristocratic church in Fifth Avenue. The “belle” of the plantation, whose graceful movements caught my eye in the rice field, is one of the finest figures in ebony I have ever seen. I was not surprised to learn that she was the best dancer on the plantation, nor that she was married. The way she waltzes, polkas, and pirouettes, is a caution to susceptible darkies.

There is one veteran slave among them, who was imported from Africa before the closing of the traffic in 1804. He is so old as to have lost his reckoning; but hoary as he is, he has recently taken to his leathery bosom a youthful bride, from a neighboring “dominion,” and is abundantly blessed with the “fruits of his old age.” Uncle Ned is a character, 135 and a pet of the plantation. He is mostly employed in pattering about the garden. He is much addicted to “the weed,” and does not object to good whisky. On receiving a glass from the hand of his master, and being called on to drink the health of the company, he proceeded to toast each person present, with sentiments and manners worthy of a courtier.

The domestic accommodations of the slaves are quite comfortable. They all have gardens attached to their houses, where they raise poultry and vegetables, which they sell to their masters, or take to the nearest market, and spend the proceeds usually for articles of

dress. Their work is mostly laid out in “tasks,” and the industrious and active get through their labor early in the day, often by twelve o'clock, or, if they persevere, get through their week's work by Thursday or Friday, when the balance of the time is entirely at their own disposal. They have a chapel for their own use, which, on Sundays, is filled with a well-dressed and most devout congregation, to whom a white Baptist or Methodist minister delivers pious exhortations.

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LETTER No. XXII.

Richmond, *March* 22,1858.

My Dear —:

It is a long and weary, dreary road from Charleston to Richmond. The train that leaves the former city at 2 P. M. promises to deposit the passengers in the latter at 7 P. M. on the following day—a distance of about five hundred miles in twenty-eight hours—an average speed of not over eighteen miles an hour, including stops. The fare is at the rate of a fraction more than three cents a mile. But the promise as to time is not always kept. An accident to the engine detained us a night in Petersburg, a venerable and respectable-looking city of twenty-five thousand inhabitants, an hour south of Richmond. I did not murmur at the mishap the *next day* , for two reasons—a delicious fish supper at the Bolingbroke Hotel; and the glorious sunrise (a novelty to most eyes), which made our ride into Richmond magnificently enchanting. Leaving the station just as the faint, crepuscular light which precedes the dawn, began to chase the darkness from the brow of night, and to dim

“The lingering star with lessening ray, That loves to greet the early morn,”—

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every moment was the revelation of a new glory. The heralds of light came forth at first with pale and purple banners; then the nearer and more radiant attendants upon the Great King carpeted his gorgeous pathway with garments of changeable crimson and gold; gradually preparing the opening eyes of all living things to receive the ineffable splendor. And lo! He comes, and “looks in boundless majesty abroad.” The skies are seas of fluid gold; the earth and the ocean an infinity of smiles; and every blade of grass sheds its glittering tear of joy.

On our way hither, the monotony of the ride through the everlasting wilderness of Carolina pines, was broken by one of the most fiendish outrages I have ever witnessed. It was in the night, about a hundred miles this side of Charleston. The train was running at moderate speed, when the crash of broken glass and a faint cry brought every passenger to his feet. A brickbat had been hurled through the window, hitting a gentleman on the head, and cutting, with a piece of glass, a deep gash between the eyebrow and the eyeball. Pressing his hand upon the wound, the blood spirted through his fingers fearfully. His young wife, who sat by his side, strove to comfort him, even while it appeared that the eye had been destroyed. But when the blood was washed 138 off, and the eye itself was found to be uninjured, woman like, she gave way to her emotions, and sobbed and wept like a child. For the first time, I felt that the summary justice of Lynch law would fittest execute the will of God. If the murderous scoundrel who perpetrated this cowardly crime could have been caught, I do not believe there was a man, woman, or child in the car who would not have relished his instant hanging, unless a keener sense of justice had suggested a more exquisite torture. Only a few days previous, a rifle bullet was shot through a car window in Georgia, grazing the brow of a passenger.

I am writing from one of the filthiest hotels in the Union, so far as my experience goes, which is “some.” The carpet on the floor is ragged and dirty; the rooms are small, and dark, and dingy; the beds skimpy and uneasy; the floor of the halls and corridors slippery with tobacco juice; the cooking bad, the attendance worse, and the landlord looking as if he

had swallowed a meat axe. Consequently my first impressions (on this, my second visit to Richmond) are not particularly agreeable to begin with. So I will take a walk, and see what a little fresh air may do in the way of ventilation, exhilaration, perhaps inspiration. (I feel better for it.) The city is 139 beautifully located, and bears, it is said, a strong resemblance to its lovely namesake in England. The population is fifty thousand. James River makes it a port. The flour mills are the specialty in the manufacturing line. The *Haxall Mills* , whose brand is famous the world over, can turn out twenty-five hundred barrels a day. The “Hollywood Cemetery” is a charming place, with sleeping accommodations for the dead almost equal in variety and beauty to “Mount Auburn.” Some of the tombs are too pretentious—tombs always are, when they look showy and costly; but the larger number of the monuments that rise above the little “private chambers” of the sleepers are in good taste and keeping. To my eye, however, anything engraved upon a tombstone, more than the name and date of birth and death, is a work of supererogation. To “lie like a tombstone” has become a vulgar, but truthful proverb. Sometimes a single word, expressing endearment, or bereavement, is tenderly touching, as: “My darling Ella;” “My only one;” but the record of love in the hearts of the living is the best of all eulogiums. To the unconscious dead, what a mockery is the marble mausoleum, with its carved panegyrics! It is better to food the hungry than to build monuments.

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The “Lion” of Richmond, which every traveler now hastens to see, and which strangers will rush to see for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years, is Crawford's Equestrian Statue of Washington, recently erected, dedicated, and uncovered to the public. It is a great work; worthy of the artist—worthy of the subject, and worthy of the patriotic people in whose presence it stands—a monument and a monitor. The only criticism I shall venture to offer is, that the pedestal is too small for the size of the statue. *That* horse, we must regard as a *live* one; and if he steps one inch backwards he falls. The knee of the left fore leg looks a little stiff, as if he had just trod on a sharp stone; but with the exception of these defects, if

they really are defects, all is great, and grand, and truthful. The bronze figures of Jefferson and Patrick Henry, the philosopher and the orator, upon the basement, are perfect.

“Houdon's Washington,” in the Capitol, gives one a new idea of the “Father of his Country.” It is more manly, more martial, more human, and more humane, than the pictorial presentment of Stuart, whose cold, stolid, stereotyped face has been stamped upon us all in our cradles. I was glad to learn that Lafayette, when he saw this fine statue, exclaimed: “That is Washington.”

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In a letter from Madame Le Vert, who is just now devoting heart and soul to the “Mount Vernon Cause” (and who has already raised over four thousand dollars for the fund), I am enjoined “not to leave Richmond without visiting the Southern Matron”—the enthusiastic lady who has set this Mount Vernon ball in motion. She is, I believe, a native of Charleston, and an invalid from infancy. Never having been married, the title of “Matron” is, of course, a misnomer; unless, by a figure of speech, we may call her the “Virgin Mother” of the great cause to which she is dedicating her feeble, yet most effective existence. Having enlisted such powerful auxiliaries as the eloquent Everett, and those graceful and irresistible pleaders, Madame Le Vert and Mrs. Cora Ritchie, the “Matron”—Miss Cunningham—already regards her patriotic project as *un fait accompli.* Over seventy-five thousand dollars in cash are raised; Mr. Washington agrees to sell the desired portion of the Mount Vernon estate; the Legislature of Virginia has just incorporated the “Mount Vernon Association;” the Masonic fraternity have taken up the cause with their usual zeal; and the two hundred thousand dollars is sure to come speedily, and five times the amount if necessary. The act of incorporation provides that they may hold and improve 7* 142 two hundred acres of Mount Vernon, including the mansion and tomb of Washington, the garden, grounds, wharf and landing on the Potomac river; and to this end they may receive from the proprietor a deed in fee simple of the land, &c., but shall not have power to alienate the said land without the consent of the Legislature. The capital stock is limited to $500,000. The proprietor is to be allowed to inter the remains of such persons as are

now in the vault, but not interred. The enclosure of the vault is not to exceed half an acre, and shall never be removed nor disturbed; nor shall any other person hereafter ever be interred or entombed within the said vault or enclosure; and if the Association shall cease to exist, the property shall revert to the State, to hold forever sacred the purposes for which it was originally purchased.

I found Miss Cunningham confined to her bed and marveled to see such strength coming out of weakness. It is the power of thought, or will, or rather of *love* , that creates and controls the worlds. There, pale and physically feeble, this chief apostle of Mount Vernonism has a patriotic fire in her eye that never fails to kindle a most contagious enthusiasm. But my sheet is full; I must break off in the middle, and in my next give some fuller sketches of 143 Richmond, on whose hill “there lives a lass,” &c., &c.

LETTER No. XXIII.

Willard's Hotel, Washington, *March* 25, 1858.

My Dear —:

I am delighted once more to find myself in the familiar cosmopolitan city of Washington, the point of my departure some ten weeks ago; since which time I have made a circuit of over four thousand miles; and seen—but I cannot stop to recall who and have seen during this long and most delightful journey. Perhaps I may indulge in such reminiscences at some future day. For the present, my pen lingers with my heart over the lovely city of Richmond. It was there I found “the light of other days” beaming from the sweet face of one whose name, as artiste and author, is warmly enshrined in the memories of millions; and, as a wife and a woman, cherished, less widely, but more sacredly still, Mrs. Anna Cora Ritchie lives, as a poet should, in a home of poetic beauty, in a cottage orné, a little distance from the centre of the city. I could have selected 144 her house from a thousand, as easily as I could the fair occupant among a multitude of women. There were flowers before the door, flowers in the lawn, a flowery taste manifest in the disposition of

the window drapery; a pleasant, affectionate, *riant* expression radiating from all around, fitly preluding the holy harmony of a happy home. Within, the *entourage* was even more exquisite still. Books, pictures, statuettes, and all the every-day, yet elegant appliances of household life, completed the ideal “poetry of home.” I was sorry to find the fair priestess of this domestic sanctuary confined to her lounge by a temporary illness; but there was no “influenza” in her heart; no “cold” in her hand or face. The society of the moment happened to be rather remarkable, and entirely agreeable to the lovely laughing invalid. Everett, the orator, and Mackay, the poet, sat by her side; and between the gifted trio, there was no lack of inspiration to poetic discourse, which imparted a glowing enthusiasm to the conversation, and brought back the red roses to her cheeks. I must not forget the angelic presence of a sweet little girl—a Paris-born child—

—“A lovely apparition sent To be a household ornament,”

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whose merry, innocent prattle, was like the morning melody of the lark—so near it seemed to heaven. Oh! these blessed, beautiful little ones! these precious epitomes of the kingdom of heaven, how dark, and dreary, and wretched, and wicked this world would be without them!

Mrs. Ritchie placed in my hands, at parting, her “Twin Roses,” the sweet title of her latest and best production. It is a story of stage life, most touchingly told; a work that few can read with dry eyes or unsoftened hearts. The “Twin Roses” are twin sisters; the one a pale and beautiful invalid, the other a bright embodiment of fresh and ruddy life—the white rose of Thought and the red rose of Passion. Incidentally, the book contains some of the finest descriptions of American scenery to be found in the language. The visits to Mount Vernon, to the Natural Bridge, and to Weyer's Cave, are pictures of word-painting seldom surpassed. Mr. James, the veteran novelist, in a very able review of Mrs. Ritchie's book, says:

"'Twin Roses' is evidently of the heart, and though other titles, perhaps more attractive to the mass, might have been found, none more appropriate than this could have been selected. So far, so well 146 but then again the book is called 'A Narrative;' and a juster description could hardly be given—for it is neither a novel, nor a romance, a play, a poem, or a history. There is enough of reality apparent, to take it off the fairy ground of fiction, enough of dreamlife to bring it forth from the hard dry real of history. It is a narrative—a narrative which leads us through scenes and circumstances new probably to most of us, but which-yet bear about them the garmenture of truth—a narrative sweetly and poetically told, which carries along with it the heart of the reader as well as the mind, and from the perusal of which both come refreshed and purified—a narrative with a moral."

Mr. James is a resident of Richmond—the British Consul of the port; and I was delighted to renew an old acquaintance with this excellent and most genial gentleman—an author of wonderful fecundity, and if not always great, always readable, always respectable, and always popular. I think he has written some *one hundred and sixty works* , (not volumes merely,) and is now engaged on the work of his life—a biography of himself and his times. It will be a work of rare interest, including sketches of all the leading *littérateurs* of the present century. Mr. James is a prodigy of industry, and yet appears to be a gentleman, 147 not only of elegant, but of abundant, leisure. He has realized a fortune from his copyrights, and is enjoying the combined luxuries of city and country life—the latter at the "Slash Cottage," the birthplace of Henry Clay, some sixteen miles from Richmond, on the railroad to Washington. He has several sons, one an engineer in the West; and "one fair daughter, whom he loveth passing well." He has written all his works through the medium of an amanuensis. His habit has been to rise at 5 o'clock in the morning, read until 6, and then walk the room and dictate till 9 o'clock. He reads his composition for the first time in the printer's proof.

The editors of the Richmond journals are hightoned gentlemen, at least the three or four whose acquaintance I made. William Foushee Ritchie, a son of the venerable

“Father Ritchie,” of the press, the editor of the *Enquirer* , is a rare compound of ability and amiability; eminently worthy to conduct the leading Democratic journal of the Union, and, what is better, a worthy companion of his accomplished wife. If the President of the United States desires to show his high appreciation of journalists, as it has been said he does, let him do his administration and the country honor by appointing the editor of the *Enquirer* to some high diplomatic position. 148 There are few persons in the Republic better qualified to grace a foreign court than Mr. and Mrs. Ritchie.

Mr. Ridgway, of the *Whig* , is an exceedingly quiet, agreeable gentleman, and one would hardly take him for the man who recently proposed the desperate alternative to young Wise. John R. Thompson, the well-known editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger* , is a gentleman, a scholar, and a poet. Both Thompson and Ridgway are young, good-looking, and unmarried. But pray, dear Pic, don't think that such considerations have anything to do with my esteem for these gentlemen. I assure you I am not—, but that would be a confession. I will say, however, that I like married men as well as single men; and sometimes a good deal better. They know more.

Having struck a personal vein, I shall take the liberty of mentioning that, at a delightful dinner party at Mr. James's, I had the pleasure of meeting, among other notabilities, the present proprietor of Mount Vernon, Mr. Washington, a very fine-looking and young-looking man to be the father of five daughters and a son. He is by no means the sort of man some newspapers have represented him; and I have the assurance of 149 the “Southern Matron” that in all her negotiations for the purchase of a portion of his estate, (some two hundred of his twelve hundred acres,) Mr. Washington has always acted honorably, nobly, and generously. But the increasing multitude of pilgrims have made his home anything but sacred to himself and his family; and the parting with the consecrated portion has become an absolute necessity.

One of the most interesting spots in Richmond, and which all intelligent strangers desire to visit, is the little old church in which Patrick Henry made his great speech for “Liberty or

Death," and the ancient grave yard in which it stands. It is situated on one of the highest hills of the town, and commands the view which gave the name to the city—so like it is to its namesake in the old country. The society of Richmond is as charming as its scenery. The ladies are healthy, handsome, cultivated, and refined: one, in particular, with a dark and dangerous pair of eyes, that fascinate even rival women.

"From the glance of her eye Shun danger and fly, For a dangerous girl is Kate Kearney."

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LETTER No. XXIV.

Willard's Hotel, Washington *March* 26, 1858,

My Dear —:

Leaving Richmond at 7 o'clock, A. M., we arrived at Washington a little after 3 o'clock in the afternoon. The day was heavenly, and the journey delightful; particularly the steamboat portion of it on the Potomac. In passing Mount Vernon, the bell tolled the customary requiem; and every eye was strained to catch a glimpse of the mansion and the tomb, where lived and where sleeps the beloved "Father of his Country"—the patriot, the soldier and the sage—

"The first, the last, the best, The Cincinnatus of the West, Whom envy dared not hate."

In the beautiful language of Mrs. Ritchie:

"Here the feet of the first of heroes had trod; here in boyhood he had sported with his beloved brother Lawrence; in these forests, these deep-wooded glens, he had hunted, when a stripling, by the side of old Lord Fairfax; here he took his first lessons in the art of war; to this home he brought his bride; by this old-fashioned, hospitable-looking fireside, he sat with that dear and faithful wife; beneath yonder alley of lofty trees he has often wandered by her side; here he indulged the agricultural tastes in which he delighted;

here resigned his Cincinnatus vocation, and bade adieu to his cherished 151 home at the summons of his country. Here his wife received the letter which told her that he had been appointed commander-in-chief of the army; here, when the glorious struggle closed at the trumpet notes of victory—when the British had retired—when, with tears coursing down his benignant, manly countenance, he had uttered a touching farewell, bestowed a paternal benediction on the American army, and resigned all public service—here he returned, thinking to resume the rural pursuits that charmed him, and to end his days in peace! Here are the trees, the shrubbery he planted with his own hands, and noted in his diary; here are the columns of the portico round which he twined the coral honey-suckle; the ivy he transplanted still clings to yonder garden wall; these vistas he opened through yon pine grove, to command far off views! Here the valiant Lafayette sojourned with him; there hang the keys of the Bastile which he presented Here flocked the illustrious men of all climes, and were received with warm, unpretending, almost rustic hospitality. Here the French Houdon modeled his statue, &c., &c."

I find the capital overcrowded, and Willard's overflowing. Although the festival season is over, there are no signs of the abstemious rigor of Lent. Brougham and his burlesques are filling the theatre, dinner-parties are the order of the day, while the ladies are up to their eyes in "fancy fixins" for the grand fancy ball to be given by Mrs. Senator Gwin, on the 8th proximo.

At a private dinner-party last evening, given by Gen. Ward, the gentlemanly and popular bachelor member from the city of New-York, I had the good fortune to meet some of the great political lights of the nation in their "undress habits." Among them were Vice-President Breckenridge, Senator Hammond, 152 of South Carolina, Messrs. Bocock, Faulkner, and Clemens, of Virginia, Senator Shields, the Hon. J. Glancey Jones, the Hon. James B. Clay, and others. The entertainment was given as a compliment to the poet Mackay, and the dinner was got up in Gautier's best style. The company gathered at 6

and separated at 2 o'clock, and in those eight bright hours, what was done, and said, and sung, although too good to be lost, is not to be reported.

In the absence of all other ladies, the host insisted that your “fair correspondent” should balance him at the end of the table (where a Mrs. Ward *should* have sat.) It was one of the *noctes ambrosiance* that we read of. The Vice-President, who is one of the manliest-looking men in the nation, and a most eloquent talker, was like a school-boy just let out of school. What a relief to exchange the parliamentary dignity of the prosy Senate, and the stale changes perpetually rung upon some Kansas, or other hollow humbug, for such a brilliant “session” at “Gautier's,” in the electric atmosphere of wit and wine and mirth and song, with Burns, and Moore, and Byron, and Jerrold, and the living Mackay to “enliven the Board!” How much the ladies lose in not mingling more in such “feasts of reason!” Why don't they do as I do? or, as they do in Paris? 153 Why should selfish, prudish custom compel the petticoats to retire when the fun begins? Here is an infringement of “woman's rights” worth complaining of. Women are fond of wine, and wit, and poetry, and eloquent conversation, and funny stories, too, when they are not too long, nor too broad; and most of them can stand cigar smoke (some of the wittiest and prettiest women I have ever seen, like to smoke themselves, as well as to be smoked). Why, then, in the name of gallantry and decency, should the ladies leave the festive table, when the gentlemen begin to crack their nuts and jokes? For one, I will neither budge, nor blush to remain, if the host does look hard at me, so long as I have the right sort of a companion by my side. What say you, Fanny Fern, Fanny Kemble, and all the other fast and fascinating Fannies, who know how to turn the tables upon the men, and pocket what belongs to them?

Brady's photographic gallery, recently opened, has become one of the most attractive and fashionable lounging resorts in Washington. It is a famous place to meet all that is *beau* and *belle* in the metropolis; not only pictorially but personally. Brady stands at the very head of his art in America, if not in the world. Industrious, ingenious, artistic, ambitious, he is constantly making improvements in photography; 154 and his latest productions, always the best, seem to be absolutely perfect. The portraits of “New-York Celebrities,” in a late

number of the Illustrated London News, are “done to the life” by Brady. His walls are lined with the beauties and celebrities of the capital; and persons who call for their portraits, like applicants for interviews with the President, have to observe “the miller's rule.” Having received an anonymous letter from some sentimental swain, earnestly entreating to have the “counterfeit presentment” of “Belle Brittan” left where he could see it, if not buy it, I gave Brady a sitting, or rather a standing. Won't my unknown friend have a fit, when he finds me “taken off” just as I am, in a brown traveling dress, dusty hat, plain hair, high neck, and long sleeves?

And now for home. But, ah! what have we here? as they say in the play, when picking up something not at all unexpected. A letter from a New-York publisher, praying for the privilege of trotting me out in a book! Well, I begin to feel the want of a new dress, and will consider the matter.

BELLE BRITTAN AT NEWPORT.

BELLE BRITTAN AT NEWPORT.

LETTER No. I.

Newport, *July* 15, 1856.

My Dear —:

May I have an occasional corner in your “virtuous sheet” to tell the world what is going on at this delightful place? If you print this, I shall go ahead and give you more of the same sort. If I draw largely on adjectives and superlatives, you must make due allowance for a young girl's enthusiasm who is “just out”—who sees the sea for the first time; and to whom a “watering place” and watering-place ways are novelties. Speaking of the old blue sea, which everybody has read of, reminds me of a shockingly severe conundrum proposed to us yesterday. A certain New-York editor, with whose name I dare not take liberties, was

sitting in the carriage 8 158 with us, quietly looking at the merry, motley group of bathers, when he gravely asked, why a plunge in the surf was like suicide? Because it was a *feel o' de sea!* I threatened to report him, and I have done it.

But I want to express my delight at everything and everybody here; and I dont know where to begin or stop. There are not as many nice beaux here as I expected to find; but they tell me it is hardly time for them yet. They say the “season” will “open” about the middle of this week, with the first hop. There is a school of young ladies here from Philadelphia, with an old French teacher watching and patronizing them, driving them in out of the damp, and sending them up stairs to bed at ten o'clock. Poor little spring chickens, how I pity them. I haven't seen any of the horrid Abolitionists yet—(I didn't tell you that “I came from Alabama;”) but I heard a gentleman from St. Louis (a very pious man) say, that they wouldn't let him eat the sacrament in Boston a week ago Sunday, because he owned slaves! Isn't that awful? Oh, isn't the music of the Germanians delightful? It plays after dinner at the “Ocean House” for us to promenade; and in the evening for dancing. They say there is some trouble about the music with the other hotels; and so the “Bellevue folks” are going to have a band of their own. One lady subscribed $50 towards it, and 159 means to manage things to suit herself. Oh, my—there's the gong for dinner; and my fingers are black with ink, my hair is all up in a hurrah, and I am undone generally. I'll write more next time. Will this do for an opening?

Tout a vous.

LETTER No. II.

July 16, 1856.

My Dear —:

Oh, this lovely Newport! It is the heavenliest place in the world. The air is so soft, and moist, and cool, and balmy, that, as Coleridge says, “it is a luxury to be.” This morning I

took my first bath in the sea, and it made the blood tingle from top to toe. What a funny scene—a hundred ladies, more or less, in a costume gayer than the chorus of an Italian opera. To see the belles of the hotels, minus their hoops and other fixings—nobody would have known them, divested of their drawing-room conventionalities, swimming about in white trowsers and red frocks. Speaking of hoops, I was under the impression, when I made up my wardrobe in New-York, that the fashion of inflated skirts had somewhat subsided, and governed myself accordingly; but, 160 gracious goodness! such balloons as the ladies sail about in here, I never saw before. It is a positive fact, that a lady cannot take a gentleman's arm for a promenade, in consequence of the monstrous bulk of her skirticoats; and any nearer approach is entirely out of the question. I must confess, I don't like the fashion in—its excess.

What do you guess was the amusement of the town last evening? Why, the Circus—Dan Rice's Circus. Everybody went—all classes, ages, colors and conditions, There were as many as five thousand people there, all mixed up with the most democratic indiscrimination—Fifth Avenue belles sitting on narrow boards, with their dresses under their arms, alongside of Irish chamber-maids and colored persons of all sizes and sexes. But we were well paid. The performance of the beautiful white horse, “Excelsior,” was truly wonderful. His master has him under magnetic control, and makes him do the most astonishing things, such as going up a long flight of stairs backwards, putting himself in statuesque attitudes, and being carried around the ring on a pedestal borne upon men's shoulders. The intelligence of this splendid creature is fearful. His eye has a human look in it.

There, that's all I've got to write about to-day. Oh, no; I forgot to mention the sensation produced by 161 the arrival this morning of about thirty trunks belonging to a handsome New-York widow—one of the trunks being about the size of an Irish shanty. I am so glad, as Pa scolded a little about the trunk I bought to pack my hoops in; and called it “Noah's Ark.” But after seeing this huge dry goods warehouse in the hall to-day, he promised to laugh at mine no more. And now for a drive on the beach, where I saw yesterday a

hundred handsome equipages, with a dozen or more ladies on horseback, looking as fresh as Hebe, and as “fast” as Diana.

LETTER No. III.

July 19, 1856.

My Dear —:

I suppose young ladies have no business to meddle with the affairs of the nation, about which they generally know nothing, and care less; but I came of a political family; and ever since I left school last Fall, have breakfasted, dined, and supped on politics. I confess I am heartily tired of hearing about Brooks and Sumner, Kansas and Slavery. But one thing I *will* say: I thought from what the Northern papers said, that the Hon. Mr. Burlingame *was* game. When 162 we were stopping at the New-York Hotel, a gentleman who was dining with us (a Boston man) had a great deal to say of the “Hon. gentleman from Massachusetts,” assuring Pa that “ *that* cock *would* fight.”

I know I am out of my element, and beyond my depth; yet thinking it might amuse some of the readers of the *Mirror* to know how these things strike a young Southern girl, who has no objections to a Northern man, provided she can find a brave one, I have rattled out my opinion of this last Congressional fizzle; and they can take it for what it's worth. Sister Jane says, the Northern roosters havn't any spurs.

O dear, why don't the beaux come! I expected to have found nice young fellows here, as plenty as blackberries. Not so. They come “like angel's visits, far and few between.” (Somehow that quotation don't look right. But let it go.) I am dying for a dance. Havn't had the first whirl yet. All we young girls do after dinner is to promenade—(what a funny clatter of tongues and high-heeled boots)—drive to Bateman's, or on the Beach; and listen to the Germanians in the evening. I wonder when the flirtations are going to begin. I thought it was the principal amusement of these watering-places. But 163 the general

complaint here is, that “the fish don't bite this season.” Among the whole bevy of us at the “Ocean,” I don't believe there has been the first nibble—and a full moon the while. What can the matter be?

LETTER No. IV.

July 21, 1856.

My Dear —:

And so my dear *Mirror* has made the “Pass” of the Rocky Mountains! Well, I hope you will find a golden butterfly (Mariposa) on the other side. But why didn't you go for Fillmore? He is a very handsome man; and Pa says the whole South ought to vote for him, because he kept the hateful Abolitionists from stealing our property. But I've just been reading a sweet, pretty story in *Harper* about Mr. Buchanan—how in early life he was in love with a beautiful young lady; how he wooed and won her affections; but her cruel “parient” said no, because the young man was poor; and how the good-for-nothing old mother forged a tale that the young lady was engaged to another; and how her true lover hired a fleet steed, and rode out to Lancaster 164 to see her; and how he fell off the horse and broke his arm; and how his ladye love died the next day, clasping a flower he had given her upon her bosom; and how he made a vow never to love anybody else. Oh! isn't it romantic? But I think a man is foolish to make such a vow as that, especially when he is looking forward to the White House. I believe a man may be constant to woman, and inconstant to women. Don't you, my dear *Mirror* ? Now, that's what makes them flirt so. Like honey-bees, they flit from flower to flower, rifling every cup of its sweetness; and think, so long as they suck the honey,—“what's the odds?”

We are filling up here fast. A great many new faces have appeared since Saturday; and it will soon be difficult to get rooms at any of the hotels. But it is very singular that all the beaux are either little snips in their teens, or superannuated old coxcombs. Why, there are boys here of sixteen, who smoke, drink, &c., &c., and seem to have all the airs and

vices of veterans; and there are old fellows in wigs, who ape a frisky freshness that is positively ludicrous. There is another amusing class here (I don't know but I ought to say, melancholy), I mean the belles of by-gone years, who still struggle and twist to look enchanting, in spite of “Time's effacing 165 fingers.” They wear their dresses longer at the bottom and shorter at the top than would be becoming in us girls; and, in the flaunting display of their autumnal beauty, exhibit but the touching memento of their youthful bloom. There is nothing half so sad in Nature as the fading charms of a beautiful woman. It is like the waning of the moon—with no succeeding moon to follow. I do not wonder that these withering belle-dames love to linger above the horizon of their ancient splendors, until the last ray of beauty is extinguished.

You see that we girls can moralize a little when we try; but I confess I don't think it's my forte; and I'll stop, and get myself up for dinner. Oh! I forgot to mention that there is to be a grand hop here next Thursday night, and then—we shall see what we shall see. If that handsome gentleman who sits next to Mr. Cranston at the “New-York Hotel” dinner-table would only come down here according to his parting promise, we would have a good time, generally. 8*

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LETTER No. V.

July 24, 1856.

My Dear —:

I've a good mind not to write another line for the *Mirror.* What do you think? One of the Boston newspapers calls me “one of the girls;” and I am told that *that* means there is something Fanny Ferny—something of the female man about me. Now, it's no such thing. I am feminine all over, from ringlets to shoe-strings; and if that Boston editor takes any more liberties with your “fair correspondent,” he'll find—well, I won't say what.

By the way, I overheard a funny conversation last evening, between a gentleman and a lady who were promenading behind me, from which I learned the definition of “a fast woman.” The couple were discussing the attractions of a young lady, who receives a good deal of attention here from the beaux—(such as we have)—when the gentleman remarked, that he had not yet been able to discover the charms of the fair one in question. “Oh,” said the lady, “she is *fast* , and that's what makes all the gentlemen like her.” “But what does that mean?” inquired the gentleman, a little roguishly. “Why,” said the lady, “a *fast* woman is one that you can say anything to.” I thought I should have dropped.

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There have been a great many arrivals to-day. At the “Ocean,” about fifty. Everybody is expecting a brilliant hop at the “Atlantic” this evening—the first of the season. Both bands of music will be there; and I am expecting to see all that is belle in Newport. Tickets for the entire season, admitting a gentleman and ladies, are ten dollars; and I believe there are to be two a week until the first of Septemtember. The single tickets are one dollar and a half each, and I hear a good many have been sold to-day. But really the great amusement of the place is driving. Last evening there were over one hundred fine carriages on the beach, at once; and some fifteen or twenty ladies on horseback. The tide was low; the sky clear; the breeze delicious, and the scene gay and exciting. Scores of bright eyes and lovely faces went flashing by us; but before I had time to ask who they belonged to they were gone. The most remarkable “sight” I saw was the “History of the United States,” in white linen, on horseback. Surely the early part of Mr. Bancroft's equestrian education must have been sadly neglected, for he rides as if he were running a race with his horse, and the rider is generally a little ahead.

Sight No. 2, was a lady bathing in red flannel, who swam like a swan. She threw herself upon the water, as though it were her native element; and, 168 with her long black hair floating upon the waves, and her little white feet flashing upon the surface, looked as graceful as a Naiad. (If I remember right, the Naiads used to go in swimming in Greece,

and the *Dryads* used to bring them towels.) I don't know who the lady was; for, I can assure you, it is no easy matter to identify an unhooped woman in the water, however well acquainted one may be with her in full drawing-room rig. Fringes and flounces! What a contrast between that feminine “biped without feathers” that I saw dancing a hop waltz in the water, yesterday morning, and the magnificent creature in full blown muslin and millinery, that sailed into the dining-saloon a few hours after! Did you ever see a ship “scudding under bare poles,” then suddenly clouded with canvas, and gracefully gliding over the ocean with an easy, billowy motion? Did you ever see a magnificent balloon *before* and *after* inflation? Well, these figures are suggestive; and, perhaps of nothing more pertinently, than of your “own correspondent,” as she now sits scribbling *en dishabille* , and as she means to bloom out in the ball-room of the “Atlantic” this evening. If there is any fun going on, the Mirror shall reflect it.

P. S.—I've just had an “offer.”

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LETTER No. VI.

July 25, 1856.

My Dear —:

Well, I went to the “first Hop of the season,” last evening—and didn't dance once! The affair seemed to be managed by a few aristocratic New-Yorkers, who “had the floor,” as they say in Congress; and the quadrille is too democratic an institution to be tolerated by these dainty “leaders of the ton.” As Pa insists that waltzing is a dangerous and unhealthy pastime for young girls, all I could do was to sit among the wall-flowers, and witness the “performances,” which were confined to about half a dozen couples. If that isn't an exclusive entertainment, I don't know what is. But those New-York fellows waltz well, I must confess. I suppose they have nothing else to do.

Speaking of exclusiveness, it is very amusing to see the airs that some people take on here. I cannot understand upon what ground they base their claims to nobility. Is it beauty, brains, money, morals, or blood? The prettiest woman, the most intellectual man, is not always the most “fashionable.” This thing puzzles me; but I rather guess MONEY, liberally 170 and tastefully exhibited, is, after all, better than beauty or blood—better than education or religion. Everybody covets it, courts it, worships it, and wants to marry it. But Pa says those who have the largest amount of wealth make the least display of it; just as a man of real learning avoids long words in conversation.

We had a little bit of excitement here yesterday, occasioned by a steam-organ on board of a boat in the harbor. It seemed as if the whole forenoon was filled with hurdy-gurdies. It played Yankee Doodle with terrific variations, and spluttered waltzes all over the sea and shore. But a gentleman who went to see it, says it is nothing very wonderful after all. It has keys, and is played upon like any other organ, only steam is used instead of wind. Every time a key is touched and a note produced, a certain amount of steam is let off, which is very exhausting to the engine. It will probably take the place of a band of music, when steamboats go out on dancing excursions; and perhaps it will be introduced as a “motive power” into churches, to play the organ. Surely, if the “progressive spirit of the age” can find out a labor-saving way of worshipping God by steam, it will be speedily patented and adopted. What a pity we can't have a railroad to Paradise!

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The arrivals at the “Ocean” to-day, which is *the* hotel, are numerous; and hall, dining-room, and drawing-room, are beginning to look crowded.

LETTER No. VII.

July 29, 1856.

My Dear —:

We have two topics of conversation here—the weather and Burlingame. The latter is voted a trump. His “card” is satisfactory, even to us Southerners. I think Brooks was more afraid of the “rifle” than of a trip through the “enemy's country.” But I have had occasion to modify my opinion of Northern men who refuse to fight since I came here. I am told that if a Massachusetts member of Congress accepts a challenge he *kills* himself politically; whereas the Southern man who fights becomes a hero, and can have almost any office in the gift of his State. In the one case, ambition *prevents* a man from fighting—in the other it *drives* him to the field. This makes a mighty difference.

In regard to the weather, we have not had the thermometer above 85 at the “Ocean,” the coolest house in Newport; but our sympathies are severely 172 tasked for friends at home. And when we learn from. the newspapers that about seven hundred and fifty children died last week in the three cities of New-York, Philadelphia, and Boston, our hearts bleed for the poor, mourning Rachels, who have been thus bereft of their little ones. Here the children revel in pure air, and look as ruddy as little Hebes.

There was a “hop” last night at the “Ocean,” largely attended—but the evening was too warm for excessive dancing. On Thursday evening, “Hop No. 3” comes off at the “Fillmore;” and, on the same evening, Signor Amodio announces a concert, assisted by Brignoli and Miss Anna Vail. The little folks are on the *qui vive* to see the “learned monkeys,” which are to be exhibited to-morrow evening. I have read in the *Herald* that this troupe drove the Italian Opera from one of your Opera Houses, and caused it to be converted into a library.

Besides a great many transient cottagers from Boston, Baltimore, and other cities, there are many persons who have splendid country seats here, who give entertainments, have regular “reception days,” and, by a liberal hospitality, contribute largely to the pleasure of visitors. Among those who live in 173 princely style, are Messrs. Phalen, Wolfe, Wetmore, Bancroft, and others from your city.

But the great event of the day—dinner—is approaching; and as the ladies persist in arraying themselves in all their loveliness for the ceremony, it is time for me to prepare for the event. We have to dress about nine times a day here. First, we put on a dress to dress in. Then we are ready for breakfast. After that we dress for the Beach—then for the bath—then for dinner—then for the drive—then for the ball—and then for the bed. If that isn't being put through a regular course of dimity and diamonds, then I am no judge of such performances.

LETTER No. VIII.

July 31, 1856.

My Dear —:

Frightened by a Petticoat. —The Boston Journal shows the white feather to Belle Brittan of the New-York Mirror, because she threatens him with indefinite punishment. Where is your pluck, man? Stand your ground, accept the threat, and tell Belle you will meet her in Halifax, or some equally as convenient spot. She won't follow you—people fond of chivalry and “deeds of honor” never go far to meet danger. There is no such thing as getting these northern fellows to a sticking point. Hear how the Journal pleads for mercy and approving smiles:

“Of course we can do nothing less than explain. My dear Belle Brittan, our remark was not intended to be personal. We discriminate 174 between the woman and the writer. It is the writer that we luded to as one of the girls. The woman is an angel in hoops, gay, witty, piquant, and lovable. Accept this assurance of our most distinguished consideration.”

If Belle has any of the true woman in her, she ought to horsewhip the Journal man for his cowardice—but she won't. She will accept the explanation, and publish a “card” to that effect, and plead as an excuse the danger of traveling unprotected, risk of molestation,

&c., &c. There will be no blood shed by either Brooks vs. Burlingame, or the Boston Journal *vs.* Belle Brittan. But there is one thing certain, she will have the last word.

A gentleman with a knowing look has just put the above in my hand, marked “Boston Bee.” So I suppose I am suspected. I think there is more sting than honey in the paragraph; but Pa says the satire is aimed at the “Southern Chivalry” quite as much as at me. According to my notions of honor, the “Boston Journal” did the handsome thing; and I was disposed to be satisfied and let the matter rest. But I shall submit the matter to the “hands of my friends,” and diligently practice the use of my “woman's weapon.”

By the way, why shouldn't ladies as well as gentlemen hold themselves accountable to the code of honor? It might be considered verging a little upon the “strong-minded” order; but I think the converse of the old maxim is true, and what is sauce for the gander is also sauce for the goose; and if there is anything more saucy and insulting than a 175 jealous or envious woman, I have yet to learn a new vocabulary of slander. I saw two women kissing each other yesterday most voraciously; and half an hour afterwards, one of them was insinuating to a circle of eager listeners, that her friend was indiscriminately fond of gentlemen; and intimating, by various nods, winks, and shrugs, that she was “no better than she should be.” In other words, that, like a legitimate daughter of Eve, she had an instinctive love of “forbidden fruit.” Now this is scandalous; quite as much so as the “doings in Congres;” and why shouldn't injured honor in petticoats have the same redress accorded by the “code” to pantaloons! I respectfully submit the question to Fanny Fern, Mrs. Prewitt, Mrs. Swizzle'm, *et id omne genus.*

Oh, glory to Goodness, it is beginning to rain; and as Mrs. Partington says (who never opens her mouth without “putting her foot in it”), “the Lord raineth, let the earth rejoice.”

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LETTER No. IX.

August 2, 1856.

My Dear —:

Well, I went to the “Hop” at the “Fillmore,” and achieved a belle's ambition—“dancing every time,” but with the same partner, Pa having consented to my waltzing with cousin Charles. You know the most fastidious of fathers always consent to the cousinly intimacies involved in these fashionable dances. Do you know it is the custom here for a lady to take a dancing gentleman with her to the hop, on whom she leans and relies as her partner for the evening? There is very little promiscuous dancing here; and the only way to “keep the floor” is to have a partner constantly on hand.

Everybody voted the Fillmore hop a perfect success. It was the best attended; and the ladies looked their prettiest. The room (the dining saloon) was brilliantly lighted; and there was a rich display of fringes and flounces, of necks and necklaces. A very superb-looking lady from New-Orleans wore a bouquet of diamonds, pearls, and precious stones, which, “they say,” cost $20,000! It made all lesser trinkets “pale their ineffectual fires.” It is no use trying to eclipse everything. Be as brilliant 177 and extravagant as you will, some provoking Madame Allcash will be sure to outshine and outdash you. This dressing for show is a rather costly and unsatisfactory business. What a pity it cannot be dispensed with altogether! I should like to live in a planet where costume would grow upon us; where we could leaf out and bloom out, like vines and lilies; and where children could be gathered from the trees like peaches. Who knows but we shall be “put through a course of sprouts,” similar to this in some of the worlds to come!

Oh, how I wish I could picture with the pen of a poet and the feeling of a man, a beauty whom I regard as “the belle of Newport!” I could gaze upon her sweet face forever, just as I could listen to strains of entrancing music, or inhale the perfume of new-mown hay. What a figure, what a face, what a smile; and with what a musical motion she undulates through the wavy waltz! The palm trees have lent her grace; and all that's fair, and bright,

and sweet in nature, “meet in her aspect and her eyes.” It makes me sad, as I contemplate this carnation hymn to the Divinity, to think that a vision so lovely must also fade and vanish. I'm getting sentimental, so I'll change the subject from belles to blue fish. Now, I am going to tantalize the disciples 178 of “Old Isaac,” by giving a, brief account of the sport we had in fishing yesterday; and let me say in advance, that every word of *my* “fish story” is true. Accepting an invitation from Mr. Henry Ludlam, a fine specimen of a true Virginia gentleman whom I met at the hop, we started yesterday about 12 o'clock for the “Fishing Grounds.”

The party consisted of four gentlemen, and no more ladies than that number of gentlemen usually desire to have with them on such an excursion. I am not going to tell where we went—only that we fished sitting, or standing, on *terra firma* , and caught as many twelve pounders as we cared to take home in two wagons; and blue fish at that, the strongest and gamiest fish that swims. I now perfectly understand the force of the common expression, as “wide awake as a blue fish.” My arms are positively lame from pulling them in Mr. Ludlam, who is the most expert and artistic fisherman in Newport, taught me how to put on the bait, and then all that was wanting was skill to throw the line, and strength to pull in the beautiful finnies, looking so sweet in their white vests and blue coats, with distended gills that looked like red ruffles. Oh, it was “fun alive!”

In the evening, after returning, Mr. Ludlam gave 179 us a splendid fish supper, when I learned a new sensation—the exquisite pleasure of eating the game of one's own catching. To-day, the breakfast and dinner tables of the “Ocean House” have abounded in unwonted piscatory luxuries—the fruit of our yesterday's doings. I no longer marvel at the angling mania, having been fairly bitten with it in the glorious success of yesterday. I don't know but I should like to enlist for a three months' fishing voyage for mackerel, cod, or even for whale, as I am inclined to think the larger the game the greater the sport.

P. S. Ladies who go fishing should leave their hoops at home, as sitting in them on the rocks is as hard as sitting on a gridiron.

LETTER No. X.

August 9, 1856.

My Dear —:

Yesterday was the first rainy day we have had in a month. The gracions benediction began to come down a little in the afternoon, and fell copiously at intervals, “commending itself unto our gentle senses” until the “fairy form” of your “fair correspondent” 180 was in “sleep's serene oblivion laid.” Of course, we did not have our post-prandial drive—“our custom almost always of the afternoon;” so the gentlemen talked politics, and the ladies talked other things through the rainy remainder of the day.

Suppose I relate a few remarks that I heard and overheard, with a sprinkling of “moral reflections.” And first, the election news from Missouri and Kentucky seemed to badly bother the calculations of the politicians. Pa says he don't know what the Missourians mean in voting for Republican candidates for Congress. To which a distinguished gentleman from Baltimore, who is a very “learned Theban,” (and, I believe, the successor of Henry Clay, as President of the “Colonization Society”), says that the white wave is destined to roll over the black; and, in the process of time, to efface all vestiges of Africanism from America. He says the growing attractions of their original home in Liberia, with the increasing repulsions which they experience in the land of their exile, will gradually carry them off; while the growing demand for labor at the South will cause the cotton and cane fields to swarm with the Dutch and Irish, who are rapidly supplanting the blacks upon the wharves and plantations from Maryland to Louisiana.

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I was glad to hear him say, that, but for the outrages of the abolitionists, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and Kentucky would have been free States before now, for I hate an abolitionist with a chronic hatred. It may be wrong, but I can't help it. They seem to me

like such a mean, sneaking, cowardly, contemptible set, who stay at home, where they are perfectly safe, and try to incite our negroes to cut our throats and run away. It is in consequence of the conduct of these THIEVES, that comparatively so few of our people are found at the Northern watering-places this year. Our colored nurses and maids, and boys and coachmen, who have taken care of us and waited upon us from infancy, are indispensable to our comforts abroad, as well as at home; for I cannot bear to be washed and dressed and waited upon by white folks. It doesn't seem natural or right. But we dare not bring our best servants with us, because, however much they may be attached to us personally, yet these lying abolitionists paint Free Niggerism in such false, yet alluring colors, that the strongest-minded of our inexperienced slaves become discontented, even if they do not leave us. But this is a digression.

There! I think I have “talked politics enough for 9 182 one day. Now let us listen to the ladies a moment. Ribbons and laces—what precious chatterboxes they are! They cannot open their mouths but out there flies something piquant and spicy; such as: “Oh, have you heard of the engagement between Mr.—and Miss—,who are promenading so pertinaciously, and with such a life-insurance policy of happiness written on their shining faces? The lady is worth $30,000, and if she ever marries *him* , “the gray mare will be the better horse. Paired, not matched.”

“There comes Mr.—, a widower, with six millions of dollars, walking with the handsome widow from New-York. Wonder how many children *he* has. Eight is too large a number to begin with.”

“Oh, did you know that Mr.—, who lives in a Fifth Avenue Palace, has had to put a mortgage on his house for fifty thousand dollars?” “And do you know, that some folks think that that child's ‘Pa’ is not its father?”

This is a specimen of the feminine gossip of a rainy day at a watering-place; and if I hadn't moved my seat just then, I might possibly have heard more than I could have written.

Verily a new commandment 183 should be added to the decalogue; and it should read—Thou shalt not talk scandal.

In the evening there was an abortive attempt to give a concert by Messrs. Wels & Guidi, assisted by Madame Stephani, and Aptommas the Harpist. The latter played splendidly; but the proceeds, I fear, did not pay the gas light. The rain put a damper on the entertainment; and it requires a very strong outside attraction, in the way of music, to take us from the Germania Band, which gives us free promenade concerts every afternoon and evening at the “Ocean.” Besides, it is a great bore to sit still two hours in a concert-room, with the mercury among the “upper tens.” But I was very sorry to see so thin a house. I always sympathize with ill success; and the artists who gave the concert have been very kind to sing and play for us in the drawing-room. They deserved better patronage; and I wish them “better luck next time.”

P. S.—The editor of the Boston Ledger has got a wrong *impression* of my sitting on the rocks in a hoop skirticoat; but I haven't room to-day to set him right.

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LETTER No. XI.

August 11, 1856.

My Dear —:

I may now write with entire truth, that Newport is full, crowded, squeezed. Sixty-six arrivals at the “Ocean” yesterday; and the other hotels received accessions proportionably to their capacities. Besides, the resident cottagers are overflowing with visitors. And yet, it is not very gay here. In sporting phrase, we have very few “fast people” among us, although a plenty of fast horses. I do love a handsome horse; and may as well confess the honest truth, that, driving with a pleasant, confidential companion, is to me a much more agreeable amusement than dancing. I never before saw so fine a collection of horses as

turn out here of an afternoon. There seems to be a rivalry among the coachmen in getting up their equine toilettes; and the aristocratic “Whips” of New-York take as much pleasure in braiding the manes and combing the tails of their teams, for a show-off on the Beach, as we ladies do in “smarting” ourselves up for dinner. The most splendid pair of carriage horses I have yet seen, belong to Mr. Parker, of New-Bedford. They are very tall, bright, long-tailed bays; and with their 185 heads and necks done up in red ribbons (Mr. Parker's coachman is an artist in his line), they look and step as proudly as if they had a Duchess behind them. If I were in the habit of paying compliments, I would say that, when their owner drives, they have “a prince of a fellow” holding the ribbons. But the *fastest* team in the place is owned by Mr. Fassitt, of Philadelphia—a pair of slender bays, all limb and muscle. Mr. F. is willing to trot them for a high figure, against any double team in the world. One of the most gentlemanly turn-outs here belongs to Mr. Patricius Hearne, of your city. It is perfect in all its appointments. But I am running off on horses, and must hold up.

We had a musical treat in the drawing-room of the “Ocean” on Saturday evening, in the singing of Miss Secor, of the Fifth Avenue, New-York. She is a very young, fresh, sonsie-looking lady, with a voice remarkable for its compass, strength, sweetness, and accuracy. She was accompanied on the piano by her teacher, Professor Albites, and warmly applauded by a room full of listeners. I heard a gentleman remark, who claims to be a critic, that she was the best singer he had ever hoard off the stage; and that if she were only a poor girl she might make her fortune by concert singing. I believe there is to be 186 an “Amateur Concert,” given by Mr. Albites, when we shall have the pleasure of hearing Miss Secor's sweet voice again; and also that of Madame La Comptesse—! Won't that be something to tell of when we go home?

For Madame La Grange's Concert to be given tomorrow evening, nearly all the tickets are already sold (600), at $1 50 each. So she will make a handsome thing of it. This is to be decidedly a musical week. Mrs. Bostwick announces a Concert for Friday, and on the 19th

the Germanians give their grand Promenade Concert, which will bring together as much of the beauty and fashion of New-York, as can jam into the large saloon of the Ocean House.

I am sorry I could not go to New-Bedford to see the yacht race, as you requested. I can assure you it was from no lack of inclination, or invitations from the “Captains” of the yachts, and the citizens of New-Bedford. But previous engagements prevented. I am told the race was a one-sided affair, the “Julia” having it all her own way. The bets were two to one on the winner; but nobody dare offer such odds on the Presidential race. Having come to a period, I'll make “a full stop.”

P. S.—Nothing to add in the shape of a postscript to-day.

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LETTER No. XII.

August 12, 1856.

My Dear —:

I overheard the remark yesterday, that it “was scandalous in Belle Brittan to publish such gossip as was reported in one of her recent letters.” So it was; and my only object in so doing was to show scandal-mongers how bad they look in print—

“—To hold, as 'twere, The *Mirror* up to nature.”

“Let the galled jade wince,” and hereafter, instead of throwing stones at other people's glass windows, look and see if there are no brittle or broken panes in their own rickety houses. I always turn a deaf ear to an uncharitable tongue. It is unwomanly, unchristianly, unlovely. And I never would become involved in quarrels and controversies in which I have no concern. There are certain ladies here at the “Ocean House,” who have been bosom friends, and now “don't speak;” and they seem to think that everybody must feel towards *their* enemies just as *they* do. How absurd! But worse than all this, is the kissing

and backbiting of these smiling hypocrites, who sheathe their daggers in rose leaves, only the more fatally to stab their victims.

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I have not been “a young lady” long; but I have already seen enough to convince me of the hollow mockery of what is termed fashionable society; and I would much rather be known as the simple-hearted country-girl—“the flower of the plantation”—the “idol of the colored people” at home, than to reign here as “the belle of the season;” admired for my fading beauty; courted for my father's “uncertain riches;” and abused for the very “charms” that make up my attractions. When I am older and wiser, I will write you a homily on this subject, giving the benefit of my experience to future generations.

On the subject of matrimony, too, I have some peculiar notions of my own; and if time and trial confirm them, perhaps I may one day come out strong as “a reformer” of the conjugal institution. My present idea is, that not more than one couple in ten are fit to marry, and become “breeders of sinners.”

Only those who have received a Spartan education; who have pure blood in their veins; who are perfectly healthy and passably handsome; in a word, only they who have sound bodies with intellect to match, should be permitted to multiply and “improve the breed” of their species. This vulgar 189 propagation of human deformities; this awful annual crop of candidates for the almshouse, ought to be “nipt in the bud.” I propose that all candidates for the Hymenean *h* alter should be put through a regular board of Medical and Moral Examiners, and licensed or not, accordingly. But this is another fruitful theme, that must be reserved for future consideration. I am quite forgetting that I should be gossiping of and from Newport.

Let me see what has happened since my last. Oh! we have had a fight on the piazza, which created a great sensation; some of the ladies took such an interest in it as to “faint away.” It seems that a couple of New-Yorkers, between whom a challenge had passed

the day before, met yesterday morning, when a regular fisticuff fight came off right under my window. It was a bloody and exciting scene. The parties are brothers in *law* (but not in feeling), and one is a foreigner, who calls himself a Count. I have heard all sorts of stories about the affair; but I don't suppose the *Mirror* would publish them if I were to report them.

And La Grange's Grand Concert was also one of the events of yesterday. It was fully attended, and would have been jammed, had not “the speculators” run the tickets up to three dollars, which amounted, 9* 190 in many cases, to a “tariff of prohibition.” Madame disappointed me. She seemed to have a Newport fog in her throat; besides, her selection of pieces was not the best adapted to her voice. She attempted the “Brindisi,” written for a full contralto, to which no pure soprano can do justice. And then, what is the Brindisi without the legs!

Gottschalk was great! His performance on the piano is a new revelation—so strong, so true, so liquid, and so sweet. It is the very poetry of music. I believe he will play again at Mrs. Bostwick's Concert on Friday evening, at which Brignoli will also assist.

There has been a gloom cast over the guests of the “Bellevue,”—the shadow of death having fallen upon them more suddenly than “a summer's cloud.” Mr. James G. Ring, a well-known and highly esteemed lawyer of New-York, fell instantly dead at the dinner-table on Sunday, just after preparing for, and helping a lady to a dish of lobster salad. A friend of mine, who sat near him, says a bullet through the centre of the heart could not have killed him quicker. Only the day previous I was conversing with him; and thought at the time, I had seldom seen a fresher, healthier, finer-looking man. He was about six feet tall, and only forty-three 191 years of age. His death was caused by paralysis of the heart, induced, I am told, by troubles that he has lately had with one of his clients, to whose interests Mr. Ring had successfully devoted the last ten years of his life. The suddenness of his exit, though fortunate for him, is shocking to his friends. The night he went was beautiful, and I could not help thinking, as I looked up at the serene and eternal stars, that the souls of

the departed, who have “gone over to the majority,” are infinitely better off than even the happiest of us at the watering-places.

“There shall no tempest blow, Nor scorching noontide heat; There shall be no more snow, No weary, wandering feet. And we lift our trustful eyes From the hills our fathers trod, To the quiet of the skies— To the Sabbath of our God.”

LETTER No. XIII.

August 15, 1856.

My Dear —:

“ That Will do,” I said to myself, on leaving the ball-room of the “Fillmore” last evening,” where there was a perfect Congress of beauty, gathered 192 from all sections of the Union. It was the first really successful and brilliant “Hop” of the season. There were about five hundred persons present; and the ladies “looked their prettiest.” The toilettes were magnificent; and several “novelties were introduced” to grace the occasion. One very stately, graceful, artistic-looking matron from New-York, who is always dressed in unimpeachable taste, a perfect “model artiste” in millinery matters, appeared in a voluminous cloud of white muslin flounces, ornamented with bunches of lady-apples, (“as large as life and twice as natural,”) her arms and neck glittering with diamonds almost as large and as bright as her eyes—a rich, beautiful, and fruity-looking picture. She dances and talks, also, as well as she dresses.

The next most brilliant costume in the room was worn by Madame—, a magnificent New-Orleans lady (married), “a beauty without paint.” The lovely and graceful daughters of the Brazilian Minister were also exquisitely dressed; and to see them float through the waltz, was like listening, by moonlight, to the delicious strains of some dreamy music, every melodious undulation suggestive of pleasant reminiscences:

“Of hopes, and fears that kindle hope, An undistinguishable throng Of gentle wishes long subdued, Subdued and cherished long.”

But I must not venture further into this flower-garden of beauty; and fear I have already “o'er-stept the modesty of the *Mirror* ” in these few personal allusions. If I were writing for the *Herald* or the *Express* , I could give you many piquant particulars touching the “personal property” and charms of the ladies, with initials and stars to spell out their names; and if I were only liberal enough in the expression and diffusion of compliments, I have no doubt that my letters would be considered “popular reading.” I am sometimes rather surprised that the *Mirror* don't indulge a little more in this sort of fashionable titillation. But that is your business.

Among the distinguished gentlemen pointed out to me at the “hop,” I was glad to see the gallant and agreeable Prince John Van Buren; and that clever, classic sportsman, Charles Astor Bristed. It does one's eyes good, in a crowd of professional dancing men, whose principal talents are in their heels, to “light” now and then upon a man who has something in his “upper story.”

Ah! this reminds me of a gentleman whose acquaintance I made last evening, and whose superior 194 attractions I felt the moment our eyes looked into each other. Strange, isn't it, that everybody we meet either attracts or repels us! We are all like notes in music, accordant or discordant; and I, for one, don't believe it is any use to try to overcome repugnances. It is not honest; on the contrary, it is hypocritical and insincere. Henceforth I mean to follow my instincts, just as far as society will let me. There are some persons whom I always feel that I never can see enough of, or get near enough to; and “ *wice wersa* ,” as Mr. Weller says. This is the law of Nature—the voice of God—positive and negative electricity. And *apropos* of my last night's beau.

I may as well confess it, I'm a little smitten. He asked me to walk on the balcony and look at the full moon; but I could only look up to him. The scene was lovely—“too bright, too

beautiful to last.” I went to bed at one, but not to sleep. Such a night was not made for slumber. Don't scold, because, like an unsophisticated country girl, I dip my pen in my heart, disclosing “secrets sweet and precious.” I cannot help it. As the orators say on great occasions, “I'm full of my theme,” and cannot stop without saying, that if my beautiful beau and I were the only two human beings living in the world, as our great grandparents were “long time ago,” I am 195 inclined to believe that we should commit matrimony very soon, without any “supernatural solicitings” from the devil in disguise. Judging from my present feelings, the courtship would be short, and the “engagement” still shorter. As it is, do not be surprised, any day, to hear that your “fair correspondent,” with this new flame in her bosom, like “burning Sappho,” jumps from the rocks into the cold, oblivious sea—hisses and disappears.

LETTER No. XIV.

August 16, 1856.

My Dear —:

I have nothing to say to-day, so I'll say it briefly. The weather is glorious, except there is a good deal of dust in the atmosphere, which is considerably less agreeable than a fog. Such moonlights I have never seen before; and such mornings too, when the sun comes rolling up from his ocean bath, shorn of his dazzling rays (like our feminine beauties when emerging from the waves). This morning, with the thermometer at 70° and not a cloud in the horizon, it was ecstacy to breathe. The world seemed full of 196 poetry, and the devil (for the time being) exorcised from the Universe. Or, as Byron has it:—

“The sky was so clear, And purely beautiful— That God alone was to be seen in heaven.”

I was going to stop here; but the following libel, from the “Washington Star,” has just been enclosed to me; and, as they say in Congress, “I rise to make a personal explanation:”

“Belle Brittan,” who writes the piquant letters to the New-York Mirror, from Newport, is no other than the redoubtable “Fanny Fern,” alias Mrs. Parton, wife of the man who doesn't believe in a Devil.”

I am decidedly not “Fanny,” nor “the wife of the man who doesn't believe in the devil;” nor any other man's wife. It is a false, malicious, and libellous publication; and I demand both retraction and satisfaction. The Boston Courier calls me a “juvenile Miss Martineau.” Now I can stand *that;* the idea of juvenility balancing the blue-stocking odium of the comparison. But to marrying me off, without ceremony, to Fanny Fern's “Jim,” is more than I can submit to. It is not only an implication against the veracity of your “own correspondent,” but it involves something more—I needn't say *what.* And this is not the worst of it.

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A gentleman has just arrived here, who has come “hundreds of miles to make my acquaintance!” (So says his exquisite note, written on salmon-colored satin paper). And suppose he hears that the “Belle” he is so deparately in love with, is “not what she is cracked up to be!” Won't he feel like the man who rolled, groaning, on the dirty ground, when he thought he was hearing Whitfield preach—and he wasn't! It is too bad. With your permission, I will here publicly denounce the editor of the Washington Star as a—, a—and —; addicted to—, and guilty of—, &c., &c. And I demand of him the *amende* due to injured innocence and virtue. There's a smell of blood in the atmosphere.

LETTER No. XV.

August 20, 1856.

My Dear —:

It is the morning after the “Grand Germania Concert and Ball,” and raining and blowing tremendously. The great doors of the “Ocean House” are closed; the long hall looks dark and dreary, and we are all shut up like nuns in a convent. I have 198 got a private

headache (the effect, I suppose, of last night's waltzing), and one or two other little aches and pains, which, in the aggregate, are giving me a slight touch of “the blues.” But “what's the use of sighing?” I can read in everybody's eyes to-day the remonstrance of Sir John Suckling to a “party similarly situated:”

“Prithee, why so pale, fond lover, Prithee, why so pale? Will, if looking *well* can't move him, Looking *ill* prevail?”

But perhaps your readers will say, with my Lord Hamlet, “something too much of this.” I have been mentally and morally discussing the question of suicide for the last week, but, as yet, have come to no fixed conclusion. Still I may make a paragraph or two for you on this subject before the end of the season. At this point one of the “hall-boys” brings me my letters, among which I select the following sample of “lots more of the same sort:”

“ Boston, *Aug.* 18, 1856.

“ Friend Belle, —Having seen several of your spirited sketches in the New-York Mirror, and being desirous of forming the acquaintance of such an estimable young lady, do not think it impertinent in me for thus writing to an entire stranger. As I think of visiting Newport the last of this month, I shall want some young companion to accompany me in my noon-day drives or evening strolls upon the beach; and as I do not know of any of my friends being there 199 (and being rather bashful), and you saying there are no beaux, I do not know but that I might prove quite a *gallant* for you. But hold! you may have a companion—some one who claims a good share of your attention; if such is the case, let me withdraw; if not, and you should feel inclined to correspond with me, a note addressed to me will meet with prompt attention.

“ James P. Seyton. ”

To which I must say—once and for all—my dear James, it's “no use talking.” I couldn't look at you *now* , if you were as rich as Crœsus, and as handsome as Antinous. I am “engaged

for the season.” Spare your affections; save your traveling expenses; and “weep for the love that Fate forbids.” You are not alone in this predicament—it is the great sorrow of the Universe.

To return to my starting point. The ball was a great success; and the concert preceding it was a rich treat. The dining saloon of the “Ocean” was filled to overflowing; the ladies were exquisitely dressed, and, like the stars of heaven, only “differed from one another in glory.” As the Mirror don't approve of “taking off” ladies' dresses publicly, I will not undertake to describe any individuality of costume, or particularly allude to the beautiful and brilliant belles of the evening. There was a dazzling array of beauty; and I suppose almost every one present would give the palm to a different favorite. 200 As for the gentlemen, I am assured there was a great many pairs of pantaloons present; but I only saw one man; and you can construe the confession as you please. Did you ever see “night's candle” fade away before the “bright effulgence of the god of day?” That's it, exactly.

[Here enters another “Hall boy,” with the following note, and a splendid bouquet, composed of flowers purely white, accompanied by the “card” of “the donor:”]

“If Miss Belle Brittan notices, in her correspondence to the *Mirror* , the magnificent Ball of last evening, may I ask her *not* to allude to the “fair one with the golden locks,” of whom I overheard a gentleman say, that she reminded him always of Scott's “White Maid of Avenel,” because I am desperately in love with her myself, and would rather she would *not* know how much she is admired. Please suppress her in your description; and oblige one who,

For seven long years has wooed The Lady of the Land.”

Of course I will. Your sweet “Lilly of Liddesdale” shall not be allowed to “waste her sweetness on the desert air.” Mark her, “private perfume,” and then chide the wanton winds that kiss her rosy lips, and “shake thousand odors from their dewy wings.”

The only piquant items to be added to this idle communication, I shall not add to-day. They are 201 of the most scandalous description, and will, doubtless, get wind through the columns of some less fastidious journal than the *Mirror.* Perhaps I have betrayed too much “knowledge of good and evil,” even by this allusion. Just as the lady who was driving with Charles Lamb near where some gentlemen were bathing in *puris naturalibus* , when Charley remarked, after an awkward silence, that “it was shameful for women thus to expose themselves.” “Women!” exclaimed the prude by his side, “they are not; they are *men.* ” “Ah!” replied the gentle-hearted Charles, “ *I didn't observe.* ”

LETTER No. XVI.

August 22, 1856.

My Dear —:

A great many of the fashionable fops here wear their hair parted in the middle *a la Fremont.* Is this one of the “signs of the times?” I think it looks effeminate, and consequently unbecoming in the “opposition sex.” I know from the “ Christs ” on canvas, that the old painters have generally adopted that style of representing their sacred “subject;” but they also give him an unmutilated beard, which 202 many old fogy Christians of the present day object to; and I have even known fashionable ladies to “set their faces against” whiskers! I, for one, rather like the feeling of them; and think a handsome mouth, fringed with a soft, silky moustache, has a moss-rosy look that is rather inviting. If I were a man, I never would have my face scraped. It's a barber-ous business altogether.

There is nothing talked of to-day, except Madame de Wilhorst's Concert of last evening, which was attended by about three hundred and fifty persons; and the “Hop” at the “Atlantic,” which was only so-so; and the Private Ball to be given by the Bellevue Bachelors this evening. These are the upper-most *open* topics of the morning; but there is always an undercurrent of gossip here that keeps the tongues of the scandal-mongers

as lively as mill-wheels. One lady has been almost ruined by the report that one of the “ *bugs* ” had entered her room when she was asleep (not a bed-bug; one of Fanny Fern's “Red Rovers”), but a big black beetle, an inch long! And other scandal of the same sort has created no little excitement. For further particulars, I must refer the curious to the “small bills” of——and—and—, the bulletins and pillories of the town, who shine in this department 203 of “light literature” like Randolph's rotten mackerel. Every hour of the day I am reminded of the melancholy warning of Shakspeare:

“Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, Thou shalt not escape calumny.”

It is a confounded shame that one or two fishy reputations should taint the atmosphere of a whole hotelfull of maids and matrons, who are as “pure as the icicles that hang on Dian's temples.” I declare, I sometimes think it's no use to be so very particular to wear clean linen, if an uncharitable world is all the time suspecting it to be soiled. Were not “virtue its own reward,” I shouldn't much care to be any “better than one of the wicked.” I have always felt a sympathy for “the man in the fable,” who, on being wrongly accused of stealing a lamb, went right off and stole a big, fat sheep.

I have just received a copy of the “Providence Journal,” with the following neat bit of satire enclosed in black lines:—

Destitution in Newport. —There is a great deal of distress in Newport among the fair visitors who make that delightful watering-place a summer paradise. The suffering is of a nature hitherto unknown, and against which there would seem to have been no precaution. It comes from a *lack of men.* At no previous season has the beautiful in that city borne such an alarming disproportion to the useful. Parties languish, excursions grow dull, bathing loses its 204 attractions, and a thousand red lips ask, “where are the men?” Laces, that a princess might envy, fall over shoulders that a sculptor would choose for his model. Silks, like those that sweep the floors of the Tuilleries, rustle in the deserted parlors—deserted by the men—or along the cool piazzas.

Jewels, that have beggared husbands and driven fathers to desperation, flash upon hands that never knew an hour's employment, and upon arms whose rounded beauty “might tempt the saintship of an anchorite.” Hoops, of a circumference that no carriage could contain, and that have to be raised to pass through the street door, crush against each other. But all in vain. Of what use is it that the ladies adorn themselves only for the eyes of each other? Even women cease to envy where there are no men to admire.

We can think of no place where a few enterprising young men of the right stamp—young men who have nothing to do, and don't know how to do that, with a good stock of kid gloves and glossy mustaches, could find a wider field, or be likely to do a better business, than in Newport.

Good! The reasonable and well-founded complaints of your “fair correspondent” have been responded to at last. That Providence editor is “some pumpkins,” as we say in the South. He takes pity on us like a Man. And, by the way, a lady, who recently came over in the same ship with him from Europe, says “he is every inch a man;” handsome, too, and single, with a beard like a Pacha, and “an eye to threaten, or command.” Just the sort of eye that I should like to have “on me” all the time; and to look into when I wake up in the morning. But such a “blessing from Providence” one can hardly hope for; and although a very sweet 205 voice has often whispered, “I wish he were here;” yet, like the stars above, he only pities at a distance; winks, but never warms us. I can only say, the remoter the object we worship, the safer we are in our idolatry. Let the angels of heaven keep all their tears for her whose tantalized lips can almost touch the forbidden fruit she may never taste; and whose uncontrollable affections are forever doomed to fall back in Alpine torrents upon her own heart.

P. S.—I believe I am suffering a little from an “affection of the heart,” a common complaint among the young girls here in Newport; and I am advised to go to New-York and consult

the eminent surgeon Dr. Carnochan, in regard to my “case.” I heard a married lady say yesterday, that “he had the nicest

LETTER No. XVII.

August 23, 1856.

My Dear —:

Bravo, Bellevue Bachelors! You did the handsome thing last night. That brilliant ball was a regular eclipser. Such dressing and undressing of 10 206 beautiful women was never before seen in Newport. The fine saloon was crowded; and the tasteful pink decorations, with pyramids of gas-fixtures in the corners, lighted up the scene, as the Italians say, *a giorno.* Sister and I had between us a couple of beaux, fresh from New-York, who kept us from feeling alone in the crowd, and helped us bountifully to the “chicken fixins” and other things. The affair was unanimously voted a great success, and only cost the Bachelors who gave it a V apiece. Some of the costumes were magnificent beyond my power of description. One dress, in particular, worn by a fine-looking “mother of ten children” was perfectly stunning—the admiration of all the gentlemen, if not the envy of all the ladies. It was the richest pattern of moire antique (in red and white) that I have ever seen. The splendor of the bodice was subdued by a lace bertha of misty fineness; and the whole effect, including about a pint of diamonds, poured over all, was dazzlingly brilliant. Or, as Mrs. Partington would say, “the *tout en scramble* was perfectly munificent.”

But the oddest whim exhibited in the way of ornament was a head-dress, composed of gold pieces about the size of a half-eagle. I did not count them up, but I should think there was at least a hundred 207 dollars worth attached to the young lady's hair by fine gold chains, and dangling around her neck and ears. It was decidedly a *distingué* conceit; and reminded me of a man I once saw in New-Orleans, who was adorned all over with gold coins of all sizes. But the pretty young lady who wore them looked like an Indian Princess in her barbaric ornaments; and surely the fashion has economy to recommend it. Unlike

most other feminine trinkets, it will always be worth what it cost. Another fine-looking New-York lady wore in her hair imitation ears of Indian corn, as large and as natural as life. My “private beau,” who, from his long habit of writing for the “ Knickerbocker, ” is always on the scent of a pun, very gravely whispered in my ear that there was one beauty in the room decidedly “corned.” But the fair lady need not be ashamed to “acknowledge the corn.” Her ornament was original, national, and becoming; and she looked handsome enough for the embodiment of the great “maize institution,” so beautifully embalmed “in the Song of Hiawatha.”

Before the ball, we had a most delightful concert at “Ocean Hall,” given by Madame La Grange, assisted by Gottschalk, Brignoli, Albites, and Guion. Madame was in splendid voice, and sang superbly. 208 Brignoli was as charming as ever; and Gottschalk flung a shower of liquid diamonds all over us. He is the most inspired and inspiring fountain of melody that has ever played into my unsophisticated ears. He makes the piano sing, and talk, and laugh, and cry; and he makes me laugh and cry, too.

“And now 'tis like all instruments, Now like a lonely flute; And now it is an angel's song, That makes the heavens be mute.”

Albites and Guion are both excellent pianists, but in the presence of Gottschalk they are like satellites lost in the sun.

Thank the Lord and Congress, letter postage must be prepaid! Uncle Sam “owes me one” for being the means of swelling his revenues. I am literally getting to be “a lady of letters.” And that isn't all. Bouquets, lockets, locks of hair, and derogatory types are beginning to be sent in. I am flattered to-day by the receipt of a notelet from the author of “Baby Belle,” one of the most charming poets in America. I am told that he is a “love of a youth”—a perfect hyacinth (I don't mean one of the “Ruth Hall” sort), and I am inclined to think that if *your* “Belle” and *that* “Belle” should ever meet, two souls, like two dew-drops, would rush into one!

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“I saw two clouds at morning Tinged with the rising sun, And in the dawn they floated on, And mingled into one.”

Doesn't that tell a story and contain a prophecy besides? But hear how pleasantly he talks to me on paper:

“Let me look at the profile and contour of charming, impudent, bedeviling Belle Brittan, through the end of a muddy inkstand. Your letters have made a tremendous hit (as Derby would say); all the leading papers in the country are copying them, &c., &c., &c.

“How softly on the bruised heart The words of kindness fall.”

Only yesterday I received, per post, a solemn remonstrance against suicide. To-day I do not need it. There's a link of love left to keep me on the sunny side of Jordan a few days longer. I'll not go out quite yet. So—

“Once again before we part, My empty glass shall ring, And he who has the warmest heart Shall loudest laugh and sing.”

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LETTER No. XVIII.

Sept. 1, 1856.

My Dear —:

Once more, Unto the *beach* , dear friends, and I'm off. This is the first day of Autumn; and all the morning I have had a sort of last rose-of-summer feeling, that is anything but buoyant. My Newport dream is over, and there are only pleasant reminiscences remaining. But the sweet perfume that lingers around a broken vase is better than nothing; and, sometimes,

“Even in a dream to be blest, Is so sweet that I ask for no more.”

The weather is golden; and yet, to my parting eyes everything is tinged with a hue of sadness. I have found friends here, new and old, from whom my heart relucts to sever. *We* have taken together our last drive; listened sympathetically, for the last time, to that most plaintive, yet most soothing of all melodies, “When the Swallows Homeward Fly;” eaten together our last supper, (which was more a rite than a repast,) and now the everlasting farewell feeling, which hourly haunts us from the cradle to the grave, must be compressed into a word, a grasp 211 of the hand, a look, and, it may be, rounded into a tear.

In returning, last evening, from our last walk to “The Cliffs,” leaning upon the strong arm of one whose thoughts always seem to “take hold on eternity,” (the most self-poised and *substantial* soul I have ever rested on,) and knowing how widely our paths must diverge on the morrow, I asked him—and I fear the question was uttered in a voice that sounded like a sigh—if we might not meet again. How my heart thrilled, and my whole being trembled, while, in tones that seemed to come from the stars, his answer “stole in music on my soul:”—

“I have asked that dreadful question of the hills that look eternal; of the flowing streams that lucid flow forever; of the stars, amid whose fields of azure my raised spirit hath walked in glory. All, all were dumb. But while I gaze upon thy living face, I feel there's something in the love that mantles through its beauty that cannot wholly perish. We SHALL meet again, Clemanthe!”

But where am I? I began by saying I was going to bathe; but instead of laving the body, my soul is floating away upon an ocean of vague, yet infinite hope—in the bright pathway that, for a little season, has illumined my “troubled sea.” Perhaps I ought to apologize for shedding this sort of sentimentalism upon the cold atmosphere of an iron-hearted world; 212 but the solemn mysteries and sweet secrets of life have been revealed to me here for the first time—“sitting by the sounding sea;” and whether the indifferent reader

sympathizes or censures, I can only hint at what the poet calls, “thoughts beyond the reaches of the soul,” that are springing up in my heart like flowers that are blooming, “down in the sunless retreats of the ocean.”

In this receptive mood I chanced to take up Everett's late Oration at Albany—a prose poem on the Universe of Universes; and I feel as if I had received my first “adequate conception” of God and His Creations. It is the sublimest uninspired production I have ever read; and my brain actually aches at the stretching his thoughts have given to my imagination. Read it, everybody; and then, like poor Tom Hood, go—

—“Kneel upon the sod, And sue, *in forma pauperis* , to God.”

Finally and affectionately, Belle Brittan.

P. S.— The Old Story Touchingly Told. —I have seldom listened to a more melodious lament for the “love that fate forbids,” than sobs through the following lines which I have received from a fair unknown, 213 Mary C. Ames. There is a mingling of the mental moaning of Poe, with the spiritual tenderness of Longfellow, in this heart-chant, that “touches us nearly:”—

VARANA VANE.

How wildly I loved thee, O Varana Vane, How madly I loved thee, God only can know. Thy fate hath covered my past with pain, Thy fate hath shadowed my life with woe. A fair, golden-haired bride with curls bedight— I stood and worshiped thee from afar, As oft, in the hush of the drowsy night, I have worshiped heaven's most distant star.

I have stood and worshiped thee! Was it right? Was it right to love thee, the pure, the young? While the cursed vows of thy marriage plight, Like the dirges of hell through my bosom rung! No, “it was sin,” so the world hath said, “A terrible sin,” groaned the father who sold To the iron heart, and the dotard head, His beautiful child—sold her for gold!

I tenderly loved thee, O Varana Vane, Yet loved thee not more than thou lovedst me; Thine eye followed mine with a look of pain, Thy soul followed mine, it was plain to see. It was hard to love him, at cold duty's call; And what to thee were the arabesque dome, Or the fretted room, or the sculptured hall? 'Twas thy *poor young heart that wanted a home.*

I knew it was hopeless—knew we must part; Knew that thy being I never could win, Yet I hold thee once to my panting heart, And told thee my love—oh, was it a sin? 10* 214 Was it a sin? All the angels smiled: The white stars smiled, in the blue above; But the world, the world, would have cursed thee, child, Had it known of thy pausing to hear of my love. Not knowing, it blamed; it said thou wert cold; Said such a nun should never have wed; Nor cared that the fresh young life was cold To the iron heart, and the dotard head.

It is well with thee now, O Varana Vane! It is well with thee—deep, and sweet, is thy rest; The womanly heart once aching with pain, Lies quiet at last, in thy heavenly breast. Oh, beautiful art thou, my Varana Vane! In thy death-robes of virginal loveliness; Thy beauty awakens no torture of pain, As when wreathed in the pearls of thy bridal dress.

Now I hear a voice that I understand— A low, sweet voice—when my heart is still— I feel the light touch of a tremulous hand, Till my pulses leap with their olden thrill. I catch the gleam of a seraphim face, The young, fair face that can never grow old; See a maiden's form of willowy grace, See the shifting sheen of her hair's wan gold— O Varana Vane, in a deathless embrace I enfold thee! Our love can never grow cold!

BELLE BRITTAN HERE AND THERE.

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BELLE BRITTAN HERE AND THERE.

LETTER No. I.

New-york Hotel, *Oct.* 30, 1857.

My Dear —:

You may have occasionally caught glimpses of Belle Brittan in the *Mirror.* How would you like to see her face to face, and *not* through a glass darkly. Suppose I come occasionally, like Longfellow's “Spirit-Bride,” and take the vacant chair at the pleasant tea-table of your very intelligent, very particular, and very critical readers? Shall I be welcome, or ill-come? That, of course, will depend, like grandma's presence in the nursery, upon the quantity of sugar-plums I bring in my pocket. But, as the ladies say, when they mean to produce an effect by over-dressing (I have no such intention), “you must let me come just as I am;” in slippers 218 or gaiters; in loose dress or full dress; in dimity or in diamonds; but never tight-laced nor “straight-laced;” and may I never have a husband, if I should ever appear in the clean streets and tidy drawing-rooms of Boston, or anywhere else, slipshod or slovenly.

The *Transcript* , next to my “first love” (was there ever a woman who had touched the twenties that hadn't had a first love?) is a journal after my own heart. I like its looks, its size, its cleanness, and its cleverness. I have a holy horror of filthy sheets, and mean to keep out of them as long as I can—printed sheets, lying sheets, winding sheets, and all. I like the *Transcript* as I love—, (that means a man!) There is a peculiar odor, individuality, uniquity, *je-ne-sais-quasity* about it that pleases my fancy. And what more does a woman require? Now, after so flattering a “proof” of my personal regard, I am almost sure of being “pressed” into your “form,” and “locked up” in your “chased” embraces. (You see I am pretty well “up” in the technicalities of the printing-office.) Let all this pass as a sort of introductory rattle, while “taking one's things off,” and preparing for the tea and table-talk.

Don't think I have a budget of *news* to open. 219 Even a woman's gossiping genius cannot compete with the lightning. But I may sometimes touch upon matters and things not usually manipulated by the electric “operators” for the “Associated Press.” In this cosmopolitan, labyrinthine city, there are thousands of “interior views”—the parlors of the rich and the hovels of the poor—wherein we must look to find the virtues and the vices, the

joys and the sorrows, the struggles and the achievements, the failures and the successes, which make up that mysterious sum-total of what is called *life in New-York.*

And there is a great deal of life (and death, too,) in this throbbing *ganglion* of humanity —this surging, troubled sea, whose waters cannot rest. Intensified by numbers, and excited by friction, we feel the moral and immoral magnetism of the multitude, sparkling and glowing in the very atmosphere we breathe. We become charged and surcharged with a sort of *external vitality* , which makes us think quick, move quick, live quick, and die quick. We have here in New-York the best and the worst of everything. Our virtues and vices run to extremes (not unfrequently meeting). Our Christians are saints; and our sinners are fiends. It must needs be in such a perpetual scene of temptation, beset and besieged by 220 “the world, the flesh, and the devil.” The “temptations” we read of are tame in comparison to those we encounter here in our “daily walk and conversation.” What enchanting vices, what seductive luxuries, what beautiful extravagancies are wooing us to ruin at every turn! Those laces at Stewart's, those jewels at Tiffany's, those bonnets at Ferrero's, and those intoxicating suppers (*for two*) at Malliard's! Can all these fascinations be resisted?

It is one of the severe blessings of these “hard times” (the jewel in the toad's head), that they afford not a little aid to one's *moral resolutions.* They have brought reflection to the thoughtless; economy to the extravagant; and even quiet, fireside happiness to many who have long lived in a whirl of outside excitements. I know it is said that the unwonted stringency of the money market is likely to bear hard against matrimony; and that Brown, the ubiquitous undertaker, has received orders to postpone all fashionable weddings, and even to curtail the expenses of his aristocratic funerals.

Many a man has failed, and gone home sadly dejected, with his face as long and as blue as an old fashioned grave-stone; and when the anxious wife has asked, “What's the matter?” as she found him moping in the library, has received the reply: “We 221 are ruined; all is lost; house, furniture, carriages, horses—all must go!” (He had neglected

to settle all these little properties on his wife—the present popular preliminary to a “suspension.”) “They must *all go* ,” he continued; “there is nothing left but poverty and misery!”

I verily believe *cousin Lou* —Lou is my beau—spends more money at Bininger's for wines and cigars than economical woman like me would require to support a “growing family;” and I hope this *hint* will not be lost upon him and his extravagant and selfish club associates. But I am afraid his heart is *turning to marble;* for he goes to the “Dusseldorf Gallery” every evening—so he says—and gazes at the cold beauty of the “Greek Slave,” which he hopes to win in the coming distribution of the “Cosmopolitan Art Association.” He says he has invested $3, for which he receives a $2 *Art Journal* for one year, and a $5 engraving, called “Manifest Destiny,” representing three beautiful young girls engaged in fortune telling. He has dreamed that he holds the lucky certificate, and already talks with most provoking fondness of his marble bride, who will be as contented in a cottage as in a palace; whose charms will never wither, and who will be entirely satisfied with “Nothing to Wear,” forever. Aggravating cousin Lou!

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I went last night to see the famous “Ronzani Ballet Company” at the Broadway. I believe it is Carlyle who calls the ballet a bevy of thin damsels, spinning around in bare arms and muslin saucers. But notwithstanding the Ronzani girls looked like open umbrellas with two pink handles, the dancing was perfectly charming. Lamoreux is better than Ellsler, so light, so graceful, and so feathery in her movements. It is music addressed to the eye; and if she could only dance on the keys of a pianoforte, her toes would play the liveliest tune, in perfect time, without missing a single note, or “shake.” The house was crowded, the applause vociferous.

Now, I am tired, and so are you; and yet I haven't come to what I meant to write. As I cannot squeeze it into a postscript (as most women can all that they really have to say), I'll keep *what's left* until I “come again.”

LETTER No. II.

New-York , *Oct.* 29, 1857.

My Dear —:

Are you prepared to wage an eternal war against the Commercial “Credit System”—the fatal Upas 223 tree that overshadows the land, and whose deadly fruits are the pestilence that is upon us? If so, give us your hand, and I will go with you, and a regenerated people will go with you, until the honest maxim, “Pay as you go,” shall prevail through the world. We are approaching the twentieth century of the Christian era, and men are flattering themselves that in morals, manners, and mercantile matters, they are obeying the precepts and imitating the example of the author of the Sermon on the Mount! Did Jesus of Nazareth ever run in debt? We profess a great admiration for the learned, zealous, and eloquent Paul—the Webster of the Apostles. Did he not proclaim that great doctrine of universal salvation—“Owe no man anything!” We love to laud the worldly wisdom that fell like honey from the lips of Shakspeare. And has he not left us that golden motto, worthy to be engraved upon the door of every counting-room in the land, and blazoned upon the banners of nations—“ *Neither a borrower nor a lender be?* ” Who that reads these words may not trace the keenest sufferings of his life to that horrible monster—Debt, which is now pressing like a nightmare upon the agonized bosoms of millions of strong men; aye, and of gentle women too! And is not the *credit system* the primal, the sole cause of this stupendous misery? Why is Wall-street to-day 224 in a state of *asphyxia* and japonicadom, withering and drooping in despair. Wall-street cannot pay its notes, and japonicadom must pawn its jewels for bread. The one has borrowed millions on paper “promises to pay;” the other has run in debt for diamonds at Tiffany's, and silks at Stewart's. Paper *representatives* of money have been mistaken for *property* , and the whole world of bankers, merchants, shopkeepers and manufacturers, under the fatal illusions of the credit system, have been “like little wanton boys swimming on bladders.” Now the bubbles burst; there is a universal sinking; the day of settlement and of “judgment” has come. The

smiling, wanton, seducing, bedecked and bedizened genius of Credit, wrings her white hands, and tears her golden hair.

“Where will this end! Ye powers of good!” She weeping cries forever. A voice replies from out the flood, “Forever—and forever!”

Let me illustrate the evil against which journalism should at once commence a crusade, by a specimen or two, showing the way “the thing is done” in New-York. A firm of jobbers, composed of three partners, commenced business a few months ago in one of the “marble front palaces” on Broadway. 225 They had for capital $10,000 each, making $30,000. A brother of one of the partners lent the concern *his name* for as much more, making the entire nominal capital $60,000. This basis gave them unlimited credit with the banks, the manufacturers and the importers. Of course there was no difficulty in stocking their spacious store with goods to the amount of half a million—to be scattered on long credits all over the country. But how long would it take the expenses to eat up the capital of this fast and flourishing concern? The rent of the store was $15,000 a year. The three partners could not “live in style” for less than $10,000 a year, each—an amount equal to the sum they put in. What is the result? The banks contract, and the house collapses. The party who “lent his name” for $30,000, is a preferred creditor. The balance of the “assets” are a pocket-book full of protested notes. *Voila tout!*

Let us take another case to show how country merchants “do” the jobbers. Tom Rapid came to town a year ago from a “growing city in the west,” with a bank certificate of deposit in his pocket for $5,000, and letters of introduction commending him generally as a wide-awake, enterprising, go-ahead, good fellow. He buys of twenty different houses 226 $5,000 worth of goods, and stocks his new store with $100,000 of merchandise bought “on time.” He goes home buoyant with success, elated with his possessions, and begins to “expand” immediately, He builds a new house; buys a fast horse; marries a fast woman; takes stock in a superfluous railroad; invests money in a fashionable church; becomes a director in an accommodating bank; pays his first notes in New-York; quadruples his

purchases; stuffs all the country stores around him with goods— *and bursts!* These are instances of actual occurrence, and with them I leave your rational readers to reflect upon the ruinous iniquities of the *credit system.*

The general complaint of impecuniosity is beginning to affect the newspapers. Thus far, nothing but the *cash system* has saved them from the common crash. There are not more than half a dozen journals or periodicals in this city whose publishers are making money.

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LETTER No. III.

New-york Hotel, *November* 26, 1857.

My Dear —:

I have marked this letter “Number Two,” because I cannot make it “number one.” The cares of the world sometimes choke the spirit; it will not always flow. But let me run my fingers for a moment over the keys of memory. Perhaps they may touch a chord. I have it.

About fifteen months ago, when your “fair correspondent” was taking her “ *otium cum dig* ” and other luxuries among the salubrious breezes and saline fogs of Newport, there came to her room one bright morning a “waiter” bearing a neat little card, whereon was engraved the name of *George Francis Train.* Not knowing whether he was married or single, I, of course, was entirely “at home,” and instantly “came down,” scarcely stopping to smooth my hair, or shake the wrinkles out of my skirticoats. I found him a young, splendid, dashing-looking fellow, with a head like Apollo's, a voice full of music, a hand with an electric thrill in its grasp; and, as the stage-struck newsboy, who “got his Shakspeare” from the pit of “the Bowery” 228 said, with “an eye like *Ma's* , and a station-house like the *Herald* and *Mercury!* ” His first words declared the object of his visit, and carried me away “captive into captivity.” He had “called to pay homage to *Belle Brittan!* ” Was not that enough by way of introduction? From that moment we became “fast friends;” and from that

hour to this, my heart has followed his rising fortunes and his flitting footsteps, as one of the *blue* -eyed “men of Destiny.” (*Mrs.* Train is in England, or I should not dare to say all this.)

I suppose you know that Train is a “Boston boy;” but you do *not* know, what you will soon learn, that he has become a fall-grown American man. Read his “Young America Abroad;” read his “Young America in Wall-street” (to be published next week); read his “Letters from Everywhere,” published in the Merchant's Magazine, the New-York Herald, and the London Times; and when you have traveled with him (as I have followed him in his writings) over one hundred thousand miles, and looked into his fresh face and earnest eyes, you will agree with all who know him, that “Young America” has no fitter embodiment —no more remarkable representative, than my friend George Francis Train. Left an orphan at the age of four years, somewhere on the 229 shores of the Gulf of Mexico, he has fought his way up the hill of life; and although still upon the sunny side of thirty, he has learned the geography of the world by “ *spreading himself* ” all over its surface; and studied human nature, in all its various forms, phases, and conditions—from the crudities and nudities of the pastoral Paradise of New-Zealand, to the formalities and fineries of the regal palaces of Europe. And; phenomenal and incredible as it may seem, he has never in his life smoked a cigar, nor drank a glass of wine.

Last evening, granting me (the most affectionate of all familiarities) the privilege of “feeling in his pockets,” I found letters, addressed to him, of the most flattering character, from many of the most distinguished gentlemen and noblemen in England; among them were highly complimentary ones from the Duke of Devonshire, from Layard, the traveler (who is coming to the United States), and a sweet little note from one of the noblest ladies in England, signed simply “ *Fanny Russell.* ” But I'll say no more, lest the autograph hunters should be for feeling in Train's pockets, too. Read “ *Young America in Wall-street.* ”

The scandal of the week is the notorious “Woodman case;” and pray, consider me blushing up to 11 230 my very eyebrows while alluding to so scandalous an affair. Mrs.

Caroline Woodman, as all the world is learning, is the wife of a New-Orleans druggist, and being the daughter of a fashionable dress-maker, passed for a fashionable lady. I remember seeing her at Saratoga and Newport two or three years ago, with her thirty trunks, and a new dinner-dress for every day during “the season.” She was pointed at by the gossips for her remarkably small waist, or, as was said, for “being laced within an inch of her life,” no one at that time suspecting her guilty of “loose habits.” Having made what the French call a marriage *de convenance* , of course “a lover” was as necessary as a carriage; and it seems that a young New-York dandy, whose family is very wealthy, has for years occupied that peculiar poodlelike position.

I cannot omit to mention a pun perpetrated on the occasion by “mine host,” Cranston, one of the wittiest and cleverest of men. “What is all this noise about Furniss and Mrs. Woodman?” inquired an excited guest of the landlord. “Oh, nothing of any consequence,” replied Cranston, scarcely moving the risible muscles of his serio-comic face, “only he was chased and she wasn't, that's all.”

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LETTER No. IV.

New-York, *November* 6, 1857.

My Dear —:

We are on the eve of stirring, if not of bloody events. The cursed credit system, the primal cause of this universal collapse in the financial world, has led to all sorts of “suspensions,” and thrown hundreds of thousands of operatives into the streets of our cities. The Savings Banks (in New-York city alone, they hold $29,000,000) refuse specie; and even beggars feel that they have *a right to live.* Hunger grows heartless, and necessity knows no law. The cry for bread may be answered by a shower of bullets; but *that* only affords a remedy for the dead. The living must be fed.

I once heard an eloquent abolitionist say, that “never a night bell rings in Richmond, but the mother presses her infant closer to her breast.” I am afraid our own New-York wives and mothers may soon be filled with even greater alarms. In the mean time, our citizens should look to the *characters of the candidates* who aspire to the control of our municipal affairs.

I have incidentally alluded to the “credit system.” Let me most explicitly denounce it as the cause of 232 all our commercial, and most of our social troubles. The whole world is in debt; and more than half the world is bankrupt. The system of buying and selling “on time,” is all wrong. It is unwise, undemocratic, unjust, and unchristian. And while on this subject of *debt* , let me call your attention to a forthcoming work from the pen of George Francis Train, Esq., entitled “ *Young America in Wall-street.* ” It is a book for the times; and will startle our old fogy financiers like a clap of thunder in a clear sky. Read it—notice it—there is not a smell of abolitionism in all its 300 pages.

Another work is about to be issued from the prolific *national* press of my good friends, Messrs. Derby & Jackson, which will not only deeply interest Virginia readers, but all the thoughtful minds—the men and the statesmen, of the entire world. I allude to “ *Randall's Life of Jefferson,* ” some of the proof-sheets of which I have been permitted to read. It is truly a great and glorious work—the first *real life* of the great philosopher and statesman we have ever had. It makes three large octavo volumes; and will be issued in the most substantial and elegant style, between this and New Year's.

But our art and literature manufacturers are generally in a state of “suspended animation.” The 233 publishers tell me that Marion Harland's “ *Moss Side* ,” Miss Cummins' “ *Mabel Vaughan* ,” and Madame Le Vert's “ *Souvenirs* ,” are in fair demand, while most all other literary luxuries are but as “drugs in the market.” In regard to the fine paintings now on exhibition in this city, I could write reams, did time and space permit. In addition to the standard “Dusseldorf” (and a very high standard it is), we have a British Gallery and a French Gallery, recently opened; and I have never seen any Art exhibitions in

New-York so well attended. Unemployed gentlemen, and ladies who have no money to squander at Stewart's, daily retire into these silent and beautiful worlds of Art for solace and for inspiration. Powers' “Greek Slave,” at the Dusseldorf, now opened again by the Cosmopolitan Art Association, and one of the premiums of the approaching distribution, draws daily crowds of admirers. For the small investment of three dollars, the subscriber receives a fine five dollar engraving, the Cosmopolitan Art Journal for one year, a chance to get a fine picture, and even the marble beauty, which “enchants the world.” The subscribers, also, to any of the three dollar magazines, who send their names to the Association, stand an equal chance to win a prize. I saw yesterday, on the list of members, the names 234 of nearly all the present Governors in the Union; and, as stringent as the times are, the number of subscribers is a long way ahead of the corresponding period of last year.

By the way, several of your accomplished Richmond belles are just now enlivening and cheering us by their pleasant presence; and among them one particular “ *Bel* ,” who, somehow, reminds me of the old song—

“On Richmond hill there lives a lass,” &c.

Also, of Byron's description of his lovely Hebrew beauty—

“All that's best of dark and bright Meet in her aspect and her eyes.”

But upon such a theme I dare not trust even my jaded and unpoetic pen. So I'll stop, before going too far in a dangerous direction. It is a great thing to be able to stop in time.

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LETTER No. V.

New-York, *November* 9, 1857

My Dear —:

We are basking, almost panting, in the warm rays of an Indian summer sun. Overcoats are put off, fires are put out, and everybody feels like a glass of good spirits with the “chill off.” Thus far, today, I have seen nothing of the “Bread or Blood” procession in the streets. It requires colder weather than this to excite much sympathy for the *sans culottes* , who have raised the robber cry, “Your money or your life.” But with Talmadge at the head of the police, there is no very serious difficulty to be apprehended for the present. His efficiency and courage in quelling the “Astor Place riots” is not yet forgotten. A mob which threatens robbery and murder will get bullets instead of bread. Not that men out of employ, and willing to work, will be permitted to starve, but even Christian charity will not give alms to the poor, under the stress of intimidation. Our public institutions now contain nearly *seven thousand* paupers, while the private benevolence of our citizens daily feeds twice as many more; and a large proportion 236 of these street and door-step beggars are gross imposters—thieves, drunkards, and even *misers.* Many beg from day to day who have comfortable deposits in the Savings banks; and others are too lazy to work, even when labor is in demand. Yet, still, the times are severe, and the coming inclemency of the season will bring terrible suffering to thousands; and notwithstanding the city owes some $18,000,000, it is better to increase the debt, than to allow men, women, and children to die of starvation. Let the streets be repaved, the wharves rebuilt, and the Central Park swarm with an army wielding the pick-axe and shovel. There is much murmuring at the slow movement of the powers at Washington, in regard to the new Post-Office. Such apathy in times like these, when a thousand hands might be employed in the work, is utterly unpardonable. Work *now* means bread, and bread means *life.*

Since the discharge and departure of Mrs. Woodman, the gossips have had their tongues tickled by an affair “in fashionable life,” as it is called, in which Miss a dashing young prima donna in one of our fashionable churches, appears as the party of the first part, and a fashionable young man the party of the second part. It seems that the gentleman

237 had “taken the small liberty,” as the Frenchman said when he kissed his wife, of making some offensive remarks touching the character and habits of the damsel aforesaid. Whereupon the lady Louisa dresses herself for the occasion, calls for a carriage, picks up a female friend to see the fun, and rides up and down Broadway, holding a neat little “rod in pickle,” on the lookout for the offender. She espied him near the “Bowling Green,” and, on stepping out of the carriage, proceeded to apply the cowhide to her traducer, to the satisfaction of both parties.

The question discussed among the young men's clubs is—How ought a gallant gentleman to act in a similar situation? To strike back is out of the question; to run away is cowardly; to seize the weapon might involve a hard struggle and close embrace. What, then, is to be done? If the woman is pretty, kiss her; if not, absquatulate with all possible dispatch.

In mercantile matters we have nothing encouraging. The banks are piling up specie, but still refuse to pay. In the meantime they have *forfeited* their charters, and only exist by extra-judicial forbearance. The money power laughs at the Legislature. But the crisis is not past. The worst is to come. Wait a 11* 238 little longer. The *Credit Mobílier* must explode, the Bank of England suspend or extend, the English manufacturers fail, and Louis Napoleon must move his army or lose his throne. We are on the eve of stirring events, at home and abroad. Look out for “the news,” and for “breakers ahead.”

LETTER No. VI.

New-York, *November* 11, 1857.

My Dear —:

We are having golden weather, but leaden times. The breath of the “Indian Summer” is balmy; the skies are very bright; but the faces of the unemployed workmen wear an ugly frown, and portend a coming storm. To find United States troops stationed in Wall-street, to guard the public coffers from a hungry horde of robbers, is indeed a novelty;

but the times are changing, and we are on the eve of stirring times, at home and abroad. Speculation as to the future is idle; but there are portentous signs in the East and in the West; and tempests, tornadoes, and even earthquakes may be looked for. The 239 commercial world is upside down; the political world is in a snarl; and society generally in a state of semi-solvency, the precursor of re-organization. Fifteen hundred banks have suspended specie payment; while railroad stocks are running down to zero. There is general rottenness in all departments of trade; and the computed bankruptcies of 1857 already amount to some $16,000,000—to be wiped out, I suppose, by a general act passed at the coming session of Congress. So we go. But let us turn for a moment to matters more agreeable—to subjects less ungenial.

I have before me an “advance copy” of the *Cosmopolitan Art Journal* , received through the politeness of the publisher, *C. L. Derby, Esq.* , who is also the Actuary of the Cosmopolitan Art Association. This journal is a large quarto Quarterly, of about 70 pages, devoted exclusively to the great and growing interests of the Fine Arts; and is, in itself, a work of art well worth possessing. But the feature of the present number of the Journal is the sketch, biographical and pictorial, of Crawford, the sculptor, who died in London while this tribute to his genius was going through the press. His disease (we can hardly mention it without suffering a sympathetic pang) was a cancer between the eye and 240 brain, causing the one to protrude almost out.of its socket, and the other to burn in ceaseless agony.

Can any torture more terrible be imagined? The very organ that gave him the most exquisite pleasure, and enabled him to win the most enduring fame, proved fatal to his peace, to his labors, and to his life. Like Anacreon's grape, that which has afforded the divinest inspiration may prove the commissioned instrument of death. Crawford's sufferings, which he bore with the heroism of a martyr, thank God, have ceased; and his mortal remains are daily expected to arrive here, in his native city; and over them we shall look soon to see, as a fitting memorial, another “broken shaft,” erected in the silent shades of Greenwood. But his works “still live,” to perpetuate his memory; and I find in the Journal

before me the most complete list I have yet seen of the beautiful fruits of his genius. Among them are his “Orpheus” (owned, I believe, by the Boston Athenæum); a large bas-relief—“Lead us not into Temptation”—executed for Mr. Tiffany, of Baltimore; a small figure called the “Genius of Autumn,” for Mr. Paine, of this city; a small statue of Mr. Jonathan Phillips, of Boston; the “Genius of Mirth,” for Mr. Hicks, of this city; the “Shepherdess,” for Mr. Collins; an ideal “Bust of Sappho,” for Mr. Charles Parker, of Boston; Arts of “Tragedy;” 241 “Vestals,” &c., &c. But perhaps you can find room for the following extract, which, I am sure, will interest many art-loving and genius appreciating readers:

“Indeed, the bare enumeration of his models and drawings would fill this page. They embrace every variety of subjects—from the magnificent “Adam and Eve”—“Family Suffering under the rain of Fiery Serpents,” five figures; “Mother and Child in the Deluge;” “David,” a statue; “David before Saul,” a bas-relief; “The Shepherds and Wise Men presenting Offerings,” bas-relief of twenty-four figures; “Christ restoring the Blind,” bas-relief; “Christ and the Woman of Samaria,” bas-relief; “Christ restoring life to the Daughter of Jairus,” group of four figures; “Christ blessing Little Children,” bas-relief of fourteen figures; “Christ ascending from the Tomb,” bas-relief of five figures; “Prayer,” a statue; “Angel teaching Children to Pray,” a group of three figures; “Landing of Columbus,” group of five figures; three statues of Washington, all differing; two designs for Washington monuments; equestrian statues of Washington; sketches for the statues of Franklin, Jefferson, Channing, Alston, Henry Clay, &c., &c., &c. All these serve to mark the varied genius of the artist, and his untiring industry as a worker. In 1845, he writes: “I regret that I have not a hundred hands to keep pace with the workings of my mind.” Such was his ardor in his profession.

“Among Mr. Crawford's later works may be mentioned the statue of Beethoven, owned by Charles Perkins, of Boston; the many designs for the pediment, and doors, and interior statues for the Capitol at Washington, and the equestrian Washington and surrounding statues of Revolutionary heroes, for the Capitol Square at Richmond. All of these last-named works are on a gigantic scale, and show great boldness in conception, the

harmony with surroundings, grace in execution, and American spirit in their language. They have served to place the artist at the head of the American, and, as we have said, amongst the greatest of modern sculptors and designers.

“Of the works on the Washington Capitol, it is unnecessary to speak in detail—the country is already familiar with them, from comments of the press and representations in our pictorial papers and 242 magazines. The pediment of the northern wing of the building is given up wholly to Mr. Crawford's designs, to which we may briefly refer. In the centre is the statue, “Genius of America,” which we reproduce. The left hand of the figure is pointing to the Pioneer, whose axe is swung in air to lay the tree before him. Then we have the Hunter, a fine figure of a man returned from the chase, with his game slung over his shoulder, while his dog rests at his side. Next, we have an Indian Chief sitting upon a stone, his tomahawk dropped at his side.

“The attitude is one of profound thought, the head resting upon the hand, and the elbow upon the knee. This is a finely conceived statue. The Indian's wife, with babe clasped to her breast, sits upon the ground at his left, leaning upon the stone seat of the chief. All this group, typical of the changes wrought by Saxon settlement in America, is admirably conceived, and pleasing to the beholder. To the right of the centre figure we first have the continental soldier, standing erect, in the act of drawing his sword for the defence of his rights. Then the figure of Commerce—a merchant sitting upon a bale, his hand resting upon a globe before him, which is surmounted on a chest of tea. His right foot reposes upon a box of specie, near which lie bags of it—all eminently suggestive of the commercial prosperity which followed upon our liberty. Next are two youths in the act of offering themselves to the service of their country. Then comes Education—an instructor with a youth at his side, poring over the open book before them. Last comes the figure of Mechanism, recumbent, with left arm thrown over a cog-wheel, the hand clasping the handle of the hammer. This is a noble and suggestive figure. The effect of the whole will be very impressive; and may it stand for untold centuries, not only as a monument to

the great sculptor's genius, but also as one of the crowning glories of the Capitol of an *inseparable* Union.

“The Virginia Equestrian Washington is a most magnificent work. An account of its casting at the celebrated Munich foundry, together with a *fete* given by Miller, the founder, to the sculptor, was given in the November number, 1856, of this Journal. In Munich it was regarded as a perfect triumph of art, and a crowning glory to the artist's fame, and it is now pronounced one of the noblest bronzes in the world. When surmounted upon its pedestal at Richmond, and surrounded by its associate statues of Patrick Henry, Jefferson, &c., it will form a fitting *centre piece* for the Old Dominion State.

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“Mr. Crawford paid several visits to his native land during the interval from 1839 to 1856, generally to adjust commissions and designs. At each visit he was received with every mark of respect, as a man and artist, by his countrymen. Upon the occasion of one to his native country, Mr. C. was wedded to Miss Louise C. Ward, daughter of the late Samuel C. Ward, banker of New-York City, and niece of Mrs. John W. Francis.”

As Crawford leaves his widow and four children without any considerable worldly fortune, would it not be a beautiful tribute at once to art, to genius, and to charity, to collect his works together for exhibition—the proceeds to be devoted to the education and support of those who bear his honored name!

LETTER No. VII.

New-York, *November* 11, 1857.

My Dear —:

Are banks benefits? or, as Judge Daly boldly said of the peculiar institutions of Church-street, only “necessary evils?” The half a hundred banks in this city are boasting that

they hold to-day about $18,000,000 of specie, the largest amount they have ever had; while they settle their daily “differences” among themselves, at the “clearing-house,” with bundles of rags, in the shape of country banknotes, of which the “Metropolitan Regulator” holds $5,000,000. (And yet they still refuse to resume!) 244 Would not packages of old newspapers, labelled “money” by the “Bank Committee,” answer the purpose just as well? I am inclined to think that the sober, thinking, producing masses, are beginning to see that the fifteen hundred suspended banks throughout the United States make up a gigantic system of stupendous humbug—a body of huge consumers, not to say vampires, that are sucking dry the very life-blood of the people. But this is a tender and sore subject; it treads on dainty feet, and irritates sensitive corns. It is so pleasant to sit in bank parlors, and pronounce judgment at the same time upon the character of the “offerings” and of the offers; it is so convenient to be a bank director, and help one's self to the “discounts;” so respectable to be a bank president or cashier; and so nice to be a clerk or bookkeeper, &c., &c. How is it possible for all these gentlemen to live like gentlemen without these indispensable institutions, which borrow money of their depositors without interest, and loan it back to them with interest! Besides, how they foster credit, and how gloriously credit enables the merchant to “expand.” to spread himself, to plunge head over heels into debt and ruin.

Let me illustrate. A well known “gentleman of the press” of this city, much respected for his business 245 habits and financial sagacity, not satisfied to draw an annual income, from the profitable journal with which he was connected, of $15,000 a year (and that, too, for simply giving a word of advice now and then as to the purchase of paper, or type, or the declaration of dividends), goes to work and get up a bank, with an eye, of course, on the presidential chair. He succeeds, and is elected to that respectable and responsible office, with the fat salary of $5,000 a year, giving him the comfortable aggregate income of $20,000. His “name” stands “number one” in the market, and his “paper” is bought with avidity. He has nothing to do but to lend his autograph, and *presto* , the cash comes in golden streams. A railroad company, in a tight place, offers him a bonus of $50,000

to accept their “time drafts” for $400,000. The temptation is too great to be resisted. He accepts; the “panic” comes; the drawers collapse; the acceptor fails; and in his hour of need, neither the bank, nor the journal with which he was connected, “have any further use for his services.” Another signal victim to the banking and credit system!

Economy, as the old lady said of the Gospel in New-Orleans, is just now raging with us awfully. The really rich are afraid to show it, while the 246 diamond vest-buttons of dashing clerks are rapidly disappearing. Some, I suppose, return to Tiffany's, while others go “up the spout.” Fast horses are selling at a discount, and “fast women” have a less bold and exorbitant look. Everything in the shape of luxuries is “coming down with a run.” Last evening I attended a “Poverty Party” in the Fifth Avenue; so called, not because the lady who gave it ever had the first unpleasant taste of poverty, but because it is not just now considered *bon ton* to give sumptuous entertainments. Indeed, it is decidedly fashionable here to be poor. So, even my lady *All-cash* , while treating us to a beautiful bevy of young ladies—the sweet buds and flowers of Japonicadom—compelled us to “perform” the Lancers, with only a pianoforte accompaniment; and for “supper,” instead of the customary thousand dollar banquet, gave us home-made cake and lemonade, with a very Weak “stick in it.” *Voila tout!* the Fitzguzzles are terribly disgusted with the new *regime;* but people who run more to brains than abdomen like it. There is not a headache in a dozen of these new-fashioned soirees.

I have seen Mr. McKean Buchanan play *Hamlet* , and am surprised at his improvement. Formerly, he was coarse, crude, awkward, and ignorant; but 247 hard study and constant practice have recreated him. His *Hamlet* is one of the best I have seen for many a year; and I say this, even while disagreeing with some of his peculiar readings. Shakspeare being the poetic “god of my idolatry,” I am nervously sensitive to every look, act, and intonation of the artist who attempts to represent him; and there are comparatively few of what are called “Shakspearean performers” that I can sit out. Buchanan's *Hamlet* I could see repeated with pleasure.

LETTER No. VIII.

New-York, *November* 14, 1857.

My Dear —:

There seems to be a general rejoicing among all but the Anglo-hating Irish, at the newsboys' cry of “Delhi's fallen.” This joyful intelligence reached England just in time to counteract the effect of the disastrous commercial news from America. The funds rose as Delhi fell. But the Indian war is not ended, and the hundred millions of protested American “paper” are not paid. The financial struggle of England is yet to come.

In the death of Cavaignac, France has lost one of 248 her bravest generals and noblest men. He died suddenly on the 30th of October, of disease of the heart, while shooting on his estates, at the age of fifty-five. About twenty-five years ago, Louis Phillippe, fearing his republicanism, sent Cavaignac to command the army in Africa; and what was intended as a punishment, became his path to fame. But ere this, you have doubtless given your readers an obituary sketch of his remarkable character and distinguished career. “In person,” says a contemporary, “he was one of the most commanding figures of the age —of a good height, well-proportioned, muscular, and of an energetic carriage. His head was very striking, and his countenance arrested the eye of the most careless observer, by its expression of mingled gravity and sweetness, overcast with that strange oriental air of impassive self-command which in a greater or less degree distinguishes almost all the “African Generals” of France, and marks them as a specific class among the men of the nineteenth century.”

Bayard Taylor is supposed to be married to a flaxen-haired maid of Gotha. The great event (to those interested) is believed to have come off a few days since somewhere in the romantic regions of the Rhine. And on that happy bridal night eight of Bayard's friends sympathized with his felicities over 249 feast at Delmonico's, (got up at the

groom's invitation and expense,) which the brother “Howadji” has served up with his usual daintiness and prettiness, in “Harper's Weekly” where Mr. Potiphar Curtis seems to have taken “a chair,” and thrown off his coat. Mr. Paul Fane, the lord of Idlewildness, and god of Young Dimitydom, also “assisted” at the epithalamium, and threatens his readers with all the sweet things said, sung, and eaten on the occasion, in his next “issoo.” So look out for a fancy spread, touching what Curtis so classically calls the “nux Pelmonico,” (which, by the way, sounds a little too much like “nux vomica.”)

Collins' Adriatic has at last steamed down the bay on a trial trip, with the owners, builders, and engineers on board, to inspect her operations. She is, beyond all question, the most magnificent ship afloat, as she is also the largest and the costliest. The botching of her machinery (in experimenting with newfangled valves and notions) has cost the company, in cash, some $150,000, while the delay and loss of business have almost ruined the line. But her speed will be watched with eager interest, and earnest hope that Collins flag may again float in triumph over the Queen of the Sea, *Nous verrons.*

250

We have rumors to-day that a hard currency recommendation will be one of the leading features of Mr. Buchanan's forthcoming message; also, that Mr. Belmont will be sent as Minister to Madrid, for the special purpose of purchasing Cuba through his financial relations with the Rothschilds. It is said the Government will bid $125,000,000 for the saccharine island. I doubt if Spain will now part with the jewel for double that sum. Her bonds amount to $750,000,000; and the proceeds of Cuba would not be very likely to be applied towards the payment of her national debt. Still, our “manifest destiny” people are longing for the possession of the “gem of the sea,” and if not bought sooner or later it will be stolen. As the bold Russian said, “Take Constantinople, and negotiate afterwards;” so the refusal of Spain to sell us Cuba, may provoke the filibuster cry of—Take it, and settle the cost afterwards.

The new tenor, Bignardi, at the Academy, has made a decided hit. He is the best we have had since Mario. Next week Herr Formes will appear; and we are all prepared for a thundering sensation. He is a large, athletic, powerful-looking man, with lungs like a steam engine. It will not be necessary to go within half a mile of the Academy, to catch the deep diapason of his “organ.”

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“What's in a name!” A good deal, in a good one, you will say, on learning that Peter Parley Goodrich, of nursery notoriety, and late Consul to Paris, has recovered the verdict (if not the cash) of eight thousand dollars, from a London publisher, for taking liberties with his *nomme de plume!* Served him right.

LETTER No. IX.

New-York, *November* 27, 1857.

My Dear —:

New-York is very considerably excited. Everybody belongs either to the Wood or Anti-Wood party. In the mean time, the opposing elements are warm and active. A bet was made yesterday (on the result) at a little dinner-party, of $2,000, money up. The excitement has brought out many of our old and influential citizens, who never appeared upon the political rostrum before. I have a decided conviction that the *allied forces* will give our municipal Napoleon “a Waterloo victory” on Tuesday next.

Politics at the capital of the nation are also growing interesting. The Kansas question threatens to split the democracy into the old and radical divisions of North and South, Gov. Walker leading 252 off as the champion of the former, and the “Administration party” as the embodiment of the latter. Mr. Buchanan's day of trial has come; and we shall soon see

whether he is to give us a sectional or a national administration. Upon either horn of the dilemma he is not likely to have a very tranquil time of it.

The doings and sufferings on “Evacuation Day” were stupendous. The associations of the celebration, and the funeral pageant over the remains of Worth, brought a more numerous multitude into the streets than I have ever seen on any occasion, not even excepting the pomps and shows of a Kossuth reception or a Fourth of July celebration. The day was extremely icy, yet the streets were thronged for some six hours, from the Park to Madison Square. I counted some two hundred and fifty thousand noses, (more or less,) of all sizes, sexes and colors (mostly red or purple), on the sidewalks, in the windows and doorways, and piled up on the roofs of houses. The military looked fine, numbering about seven thousand; while the curious crowd, and the great army of “the unemployed,” who have nothing to do but to get up shows, gaze at shows (and *quelque choses*), made humanity look cheap, as well as picturesque. The “catafalque,” designed, I believe, by the artist 253 Cafferty, and drawn by sixteen white horses veiled in black, was a very imposing affair. But for all the details, I must refer you to the indefatigable reporters of the morning press. The masonic ceremonies at the tomb, and Mayor Wood's elegiac address, have also been handed over to history in the irrevocable records of the newspapers. The whole affair made a grand show; but it cost money enough to give a pullet to every one of our fifty thousand beggars for a week of Thanksgiving.

Among the literary sumptuosities of the season I have seen nothing handsomer or richer than Appleton's “ *World-Noted Women* ,” and Derby & Jackson's new edition (on steel), of Dick Tinto's “ *Court of Napoleon.* ” The latter contains an additional “beauty” in the portrait of Miss Patterson of Baltimore, who, with the beautiful Grace Ingersoll of Connecticut, were the ruling American belles at the Court of the great Napoleon. I don't know how these magnificences in the shape of books will sell in these economizing times; but I suppose there are always a thousand or two who can afford to spend a few dollars on a “Christmas present,” and not feel the poorer for it.

The Messrs. Appleton have also issued, as one of the “luxuries of the season,” a superbly illustrated 13 254 edition of Bryant, the patriarch of American poets, who is now sunning his frosty beard and wintry nature somewhere in the Southern Orient. Of course you have received it, and “said your say” of it. But have you looked into “Young America in Wall-street? If not, let me commend it to your readers as a stimulant when they feel dull and dozy, but not quite sleepy. It is like reading prophecies in the day of their fulfillment.

Bonner's “Ledger” holds its own—a weekly issue of 330,000 copies, and no humbug! Bonner's success is truly wonderful—phenomenal; and he is now making a *profit* of about two thousand dollars a week, after having paid for his *nine* steam presses, which he runs without stopping, night and day, the Sabbath only excepted. He is a Connecticut boy, a graduate of the Mirror office, and one of the shrewdest and best business men in the city. He keeps entirely out of politics and speculation; utterly free from *isms;* employs the best writers and artists; prints on the whitest of paper; and spends $75,000 a year for advertising.

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LETTER No. X.

New-York, *October* 19, 1857.

My Dear —:

* * * * *

Our rich men, who pay heavy taxes, are strangely apathetic in regard to the administration of our municipal affairs. They have not only trifled with their privileges, but neglected their duties as citizens. And now they see these “blood and bread” mobs howling through the streets, threatening to rob the vaults of the banks; to steal the funds of the government; and to make a descent upon the oyster-houses and restaurants, while the “authorities,” the demagogues in office, dare not disperse them, for fear of periling their own political

popularity with the ragged ruffians, whose “votes are as good as any man's!” My dear—, does not a city of a million of miscellaneous men require the strong, quick, absolute arm of despotism to govern it? At all events, we begin to feel the necessity of the one-man power at the head of our city; and that power must be vested in some rare Bayard— *sans peur, sans reproche.*

I fear that a tuppenny economy, on the part of the Postmaster-General, will disgrace us with an 256 apology for a post-office edifice, crowded into some corner of the Park. This is not the place for it, and $250,000 is not a sum adequate for such a purpose. If our popular and energetic Postmaster, Fowler, were at the head of the department, where he ought to be, and where he will be, if he lives four years longer, we should not only have a suitable building, in a suitable place, bat a reformed system of administering the entire department, with a cheap Ocean Postage, that would satisfy our people and benefit the entire world. When shall we see our cabinets composed of men with cosmopolitan ideas, and not contracted in their notions by the littleness of the villages from which they sprung?

Our leading theatres are doing remarkably well, They put forth extra attractions, and draw excellent houses. Charles Matthews, at the Broadway, is a perfect trump. Let me here say to Mr. Mark Smith's numerous friends in Now-Orleans, that he is rapidly growing in excellence and favor. There are few actors on the stage more intelligent, more gentlemanly, or more admired, than the accomplished son of the veteran Sol. His *Dominie Samson* , in “Guy Mannering,” was “pro-di-gous!” The opera is fairly attended; and yet Ullman talks blue; says it don't pay, and has proposed a reduction of salaries. The 257 Sunday evening sacred concerts at the Academy are popular—with foreigners—and *look* profitable. Our pious people, who regard religion as an *insurance against fire in the world to come* , turn up the whites of their eyes at these Sunday entertainments. Nothing will do for them but conference meetings, or tea-table scandal. But, as the tipsy deacon said to the brother deacon, who remonstrated with him, “I forgive ye,” so let us not be too hard

upon the *unco guid* , who denounce all amusement as sin, not sanctioned by their own narrow circle and bigoted sect.

The new adaptation of a French play, by the two Franks (Goodrich and Warden), called the “Maiden Wife,” has made a hit. Goodrich, you know, is “Dick Tinto,” a son of “Peter Parley,” and the author of that magnificent work, “The Court of Napoleon,” brought out for the holidays last year by Derby & Jackson. He is a clever writer, and in high social standing—a fact which helps along his dramatic pieces not a little.

But I am getting beyond my limits; and will only add, that nearly all the newspapers of the city have published Mr. Woodman's letter in regard to his unhappy domestic affairs, and the popular indignation against Furniss has risen to boiling pitch; in 258 fact, almost to boiling pitch and feathers. For his wretched victim, who seems to have been “weak in the upper story,” there is a general feeling of pity. I choose to regard her errors in the charitable spirit of the poet, rather than with the cold censure of the Puritan:

“Oh, gently scan your brither man, Still gentlier sister woman: We all hae gane a kennin wrang; To step aside is human.”

LETTER No. XI.

New-York, *November* 21, 1857.

My Dear —:

Dropping in, yesterday, at the St. Nicholas, I met our old friend Coleman, now one of the proprietors of that immense “institution,” and was not a little surprised at the additions recently made to that ever-expanding hotel, which seems to be continually spreading, like the banyan tree. In the new part on Mercer-street, there is a large reading-room, lighted from above; and two billiard saloons, with fourteen first-class tables—one is public, and the other is for the guests of the house only. The St. Nicholas has 259 now about six hundred

rooms, and is, I believe, the largest hotel in the world. As to its management, under such experienced heads as Treadwell and Coleman, “it is not necessary that I write unto you.” It's praise is in all the newspapers.

But in less than a year from this we shall have the new Madison Square Hotel to talk about; and if the owner, Mr. Eno, can induce Monnot and Cranston, of New-York hotel fame, to preside over it, we shall have the most elegant establishment of the kind in the world. But Monnot is a retired gentleman of fortune, and Cranston is making one at the rate of a hundred thousand a year. So I fear the new hotel will go into less fortunate and popular hands.

At the French Gallery yesterday, I met your Jim Valentine, who was of course delighted with Rosa Bonheur's dog and cattle. For the dog, the proprietor asks one thousand dollars; for the cattle (three figures), four thousand; for Messonnier's “Chess Player” (very small), four thousand; for “Reading the Scriptures,” by Muller, fifteen hundred; and for Ary Schaffar's “Christ,” five thousand (the living original was sold for thirty of the smallest pieces of silver)! But this is truly a great picture. It is Christ on the cross, with a reed in his hand, the mock sceptre; 260 and the thorns pressing into his brow with painful reality. In removing the “purple robe” (which the painter has taken the liberty of making red for the sake of the contrast), the pale, pure, passionless figure is exposed, with a terrible life-likeness—almost death-likeness of color and expression. The sweet face is sad, the calm brow shaded with the sins and sufferings of humanity; but the charity, the serenity, the love of the Redeemer, is spread, like a soft moonlight, over all; and you feel at once the divinity of the artist and his subject. It is a glorious picture; the most exalted “Christ” I have ever seen on canvas, or anywhere else, except in the ideal picture. gallery of my own imagination.

To come down from the holy Cross of inspired Art, to the every-day Cross of Reality, the burthen we all must bear, as best we may; sometimes amid the scoffs, and jeers, and cruelties of the crowd, always with sad and weary footsteps, and bending beneath—

“—The weight of care, That presses into dumb despair One-half the human race—”

How is it this cold day with the multitude of hungry beggars, who swarm our “streets of palaces,” and, like Lazarus of old, supplicate for crumbs at 261 rich men's doors? What is to be done for them? The hungry horde increases; the tide of poverty is rising higher and higher, and the icy winter wind fills the shivering poor with dangerous discontent. In the meantime, our sleek, fat, and fashionable “Christians” go on piling up palatial churches to the “glory of God” (and themselves), giving the starving poor stones instead of bread, sermons instead of meat. It strikes me, an unprejudiced admirer of the Sermon on the Mount, and an independent observer of the ways and doings of the reverend sermonizers of the Fifth Avenue, that if Jesus Christ should revisit us to-day, he would enter these cold and costly “temples” very much in the same state of indignation and disgust that he displayed in the sordid sanctuary of Jerusalem. The fact is, our modern “religion” has become too generally a formality and a farce—one of the most stupendous shams and swindles of the age. We want a new band of bold “Reformers” in the Church, in the State, and in Society. The sweet charity and beautiful simplicity of primitive Christianity is something we read of, seldom see. But such reflections, perhaps, are not only unexpected, but out of place, in the columns of profane journalism. Asking pardon of the “pious” reader for touching sacred things 13* 262 with secular fingers, I'll say no more. It is a heresy worthy of the stake, to hint that the “Church” has become an institution for the benefit of the priest rather than of the people—so mum's the word.

LETTER No. XII.

New-York, *November* 10, 1857

My Dear —:

Shall I add an occasional ray or two to your brightly twinkling beams? Perhaps you may think, in glancing towards Gotham, that light cannot come out of darkness. I will not stop

to argue the question. Our city affairs are just now in a somewhat chaotic condition—financially, commercially, and politically. The currents of society are unusually disturbed, agitated, and we know not what the day may bring forth. The times are badly out of joint—business is sadly deranged.

This is not exactly the truth of the matter. F—did apply last Spring for the situation, (attaché to the mission at the Hague,) and stood a good chance of getting it; in fact, it was counted a sure thing. But on driving his dashing tandem 263 team over to Brooklyn one fine Sunday, to make a call on Mrs. Murphy, he so disgusted that accomplished and sensible lady, that she insisted on her husband's prompt repudiation of the proposed *attaché.* The thing was done, and the honor of the country saved.

December is near, and with it comes the convening of Congress, and the rush to the political capital of the nation. What will Congress do? Buy Cuba, build the Pacific Railroad, pass a National Bankrupt Act to wipe out sixteen hundred millions of mercantile debts; and with the bonds issued for the purchase of the saccharine soil of Cuba, and to build the road to the Pacific, create the basis of a bank that will give us a currency at par all the world over.

LETTER No. XIII.

New-York, *November* 18, 1857.

My Dear —:

I learn that “The Washington Art Association” is about to open its exhibition in your city. Among the pictures contributed by our New-York artists is 264 one entitled “The Gossips,” by Mrs. Lily M. Spencer. This production will attract much attention. It is not only a popular production, but has merits which will challenge the respectful consideration of the connoisseurs. Mrs. Spencer is a young woman (a wife and a mother) of varied powers, and seeming equally at home in figures, “still life,” and animals. The “fruit pieces” from

her hand have been pronounced by our severest critics among the best ever painted in this country. All her figure compositions are pervaded by a quiet humor, which seems to be her leading characteristic in expression; though her “Il Penseroso,” painted for our “Cosmopolitan Art Association,” shows her to be equal to the requirements of serious composition. This last-named painting is one of the finest embodiments of the poet's conception that we have seen. Although English born, yet few artists are more thoroughly American than this lady, in feeling, choice of subject, and delineation. “The Gossips,” above referred to, will prove this. “It is a picture over which Hogarth himself would have dwelt in admiration,” as one of our eminent connoisseurs was heard to express himself while looking at it. Let me commend it to the readers of the *Star,* to the members of Congress, and to the editors and critics of the 265 capital, as worthy of careful notice; and the fair and gifted artist as a woman worthy of generous consideration—a lady who paints with one hand, and holds her baby with the other. The picture is for sale, let me remind your Corcorans, your Riggses, and other munificent patrons of art; and the artist has four children to feed.

LETTER No. XIV.

New-York, *December* 2, 1857.

My Dear —:

Mackay, of the *London Illustrated News,* was the star of the evening at the recent anniversary of the St. Andrew's Society. His speech was the only one really worth reading or reporting. I could not help contrasting the intelligence, the soundness, and the originality of Mackay, with the platitudes and inanities of certain official “dignities,” who “speak by the card,” on these fête, days of the Saints. But when men have nothing to say, all they can do is to say it. The bore of the thing is, that they keep repeating 266 it, and never know when to sit down. Let such driveling fogies take a lesson of brevity from the British general who captured Scinde, and telegraphed his victory in a word—“ *Peccavi* ” (I have sinned).

I am pained to notice the sudden death of Mr. N. R. Stimson, the editor and proprietor of the *Day Book.* For years, he used to abuse me occasionally; but *then* we were, personally, strangers. After making his acquaintance, I found him always friendly, and always disposed to be just, and even generous. He worked hard to establish and build up the *Day Book,* and succeeded in obtaining for it a weekly circulation of 30,000 copies, principally in the South; but the Daily was always a drag upon his brain and his pocket, and congestion of the heart was the result of constant excitement and unrequited toil. I have no doubt, if the disembodied soul passes immediately into a state of conscious individual existence, that our departed friend is now rejoicing (not over the defeat of Wood, for that would have been a hard blow to him), but in his everlasting release from all mundane cares, particularly those of the *Day Book.* We should as soon mourn over the transportation of a tired horse from the heavy tread-mill to the green pasture, as over the death of a weary journalist, who 267 has daily woven his heart and brain into his sheet (his *winding* sheet), while at the same time crushed with the business, cares, and troubles of his “office.” For the bereaved wife and little ones, there is abundant call for sympathy; for the departed, we can only say—

“After life's fitful fever He sleeps well: Nothing can touch him further.”

The Journal of Commerce, which must feel badly after the defeat of its candidate, for whom it so zealously labored, notwithstanding its admission that Mayor Wood was not exactly a model merchant, is piously calling on its business readers to steal awhile away from Wall-street and every worldly care, and spend an hour about mid-day in humble, hopeful prayer, in the Old Dutch Church, corner of William and Ann streets! It strikes me (who am no better than one of the wicked) that this is decidedly a Peck-sniffian dodge. When a man is shinning and tearing round for money to pay his notes, it won't help out much to “supplicate the throne of grace” with a long face in the synagogue. I don't know what the experience of your readers may be, but I have always found the coldest,

cruelest, and most inexorable 268 persons to deal with among that class of public-praying Pharisees, who make a “show” of their religion.

LETTER No. XV.

New-york Hotel, *December,* 1857.

My Dear —:

In my last epistle to the Athenians, I was re-rejoicing over some of the literary sumptuosities of the season. I have since received from the Messrs. Appleton (princely publishers they are) a magnificent copy of Bryant, printed on the pearliest of paper, and most exquisitely illustrated. I have never been an enthusiastic admirer of the grave, cold, and somewhat ascetic author of “Thanatopsis.” He is as chaste and as pure as the icicles on Dian's temple, and just about as chilling. Yet he is severely orthodox in his morality; and still more severely artistic in his verse. His marble rhymes never warm, never inspire me; but they are so perfectly chisseled, that I yield to them the same sort of cold admiration one feels for a faultless ideal statue of stone; not the glowing ardor excited by the living reality of flesh and blood. There is more 269 genuine poetry in a single song of Burns, or in Longfellow's “Santa Philomena,” than in whole libraries of Thanatopsistine sermons in blank verse. But Bryant is a “standard poet;” and I must not speak depreciatingly of one, for whom a nich is already prepared in the pantheon of the American heart. Appleton's costly edition is an evidence of the high estimation in which the patriarchal poet is held; and there will be issued few “Holiday Books” more acceptable than this.

On Saturday there was a day-performance at Niblo's, for the special accommodation of nurses, children and invalids. The shouts of the juveniles were perfectly exhilarating. I saw Zanfretta, the miraculous rope-dancer, for the first time. She is young, good-looking, graceful, wonderful; and seems to have a “centre of gravity” in every limb. Of course, she draws “like a house afire.”

I have just been reading one of Dr. Mackay's New-York letters to the Illustrated London News. He says, we New-York ladies are far ahead of London and Paris in our spread of crinoline. It is my private opinion that we are making a little too big “a swell,” and, for one, I am determined to *subside* “about a foot or so.”

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LETTER No. XVI.

New-York, *December* 7, 1857.

My Dear —:

The literary “lion” of the hour with us just now is Charles Mackay, LL. D., the poet-editor of the “ *Illustrated London News.* ” He is making a six months' visit to the United States; writing a weekly letter home, and, as he travels, will read three or four lectures on Poetry and Song in the principal cities of the Union. He began his course in Boston, greatly delighting the *literati* of that most intellectual city, and will get through with New-York and Brooklyn, this week. He is one of the best living poets of England—a man of refined taste and “most excellent fancy;” and although his name has long been familiar to American ears, as a sweet singer of the “Songs of Progress,” yet his principal productions have never been republished in this country. His “ *Mug of Gold* ” has made the fortune of an eloquent gentleman who has been reading it as a public literary entertainment in England, and his “ *May Mary* ” is one of the most touching ballads in the language. It reminds one, in its beautiful simplicity and charity, of Hood's “ *Bridge of Sighs* ”—that blessed evangel to the despairing Magdalens, 271 whose sins and sorrows so sadden all our cities. Like all men of true merit and genuine genius, Mackay is a remarkably quiet, unobtrusive man, and not at all of the sort to make what is vulgarly, but most expressively, called a “splurge,” in the literary or social world. His lectures are admirably written, but more instructive, perhaps, than entertaining. They must be carefully listened to, and by cultivated hearers, to be fully appreciated. I understand Dr. Mackay has written a “Romance” in blank verse,

which he has been invited to read here; and I have no doubt it will suit the popular taste, even better than his chaste, elegant, and analytical lectures. But I believe he intends to visit your city next week, when your readers should not neglect hearing and seeing the author of " *The Good Time Coming* ," and " *Cheer, Boys, Cheer!* " As a veteran journalist, who was "on the *London Chronicle* " twenty-one years ago, when Charles Dickens was a reporter for the same, I recommend him to the "gentlemen of the press" of your good city, as a poet, a scholar, and an editor, eminently worthy of a cordial reception at their brotherly hands.

The Opera here, as you are aware, from your recent flying visit, is doing a splendid business, and everybody is rejoicing in its success. The average 272 receipts are about $3,000 a night, an encouraging evidence that a good thing will be well appreciated, and liberally rewarded, even in the tightest of times. Meyerbeer's " *Robert* " is magnificently rendered; and the energetic manager and his excellent artists are deserving of the highest credit for their expenditures and exertions to please the public, and do justice to the composer. Herr Formes, as you must have been convinced, is the greatest, best, and profoundest *basso* ever heard in America.

LETTER No. XVII.

New-York, *November* 20, 1857.

My Dear —:

When a woman gets something pretty she can't help talking about it. Let me excite a little envy (we all like to be envied) by telling you what beauful presents I have had to-day. I say *presents* , for there are two of them; blessings, like misfortunes, seldom come singly. And what do you think they are? Not rings, nor bracelets, nor dry goods, nor bonnets; but BOOKS; and the handsomest and most sumptuous books I have ever seen. The

binding, the printing, the engravings, are all perfectly magnificent. 273 One is “The Court of Napoleon,” from Derby & Jackson; and the other “World-Noted Women,” from Appleton's.

The former you may have seen, as a small edition was published last year, and immediately disposed of at twelve dollars a copy; but before a second edition could be issued a fire destroyed the plates. The new edition (only one thousand are to be printed) is far superior to the first, and is really in itself a gem of art. The sketches of the beautiful women who reigned *with* and *over* the Great Napoleon are written by Frank B. Goodrich, Esq. (Dick Tinto), the talented son of our old friend “Peter Parley,” whose acquaintance we made in the nursery. “Dick Tinto,” by the way, is getting to be quite a popular dramatist. In connection with Frank Warden, he has brought out another *two Frank piece* , “The Maiden Wife,” which is drawing fashionable crowds at “Wallack's.” But I like his books better than his plays; and to speak right out like a woman, I am perfectly delighted with his “Court of Napoleon.”

My other feast between two covers is equally rich and rare. The following is a list of illustrations: Sappho, the Greek Poetess, called the “Tenth Muse;” Lucretia, denominated the “Glory of Women;” 274 Aspasia, the Love of Pericles; Cleopatra, the Egyptian Queen who charmed Marc Anthony; St. Cecilia, the Patroness of Music; Heloise, Wife of Abelard; Laura, the Beloved of Petrarch, the Italian Poet; Valentina of Milan, a beautiful and accomplished Woman, daughter of John II. of France; Joan of Arc, Maid of Orleans; Margaret of Anjou, Queen of Navarre, pronounced by Brantôme “a perfect beauty;” Isabella of Castile, the celebrated Queen of Spain; Lady Jane Grey, beheaded at seventeen years of age; Pocahontas, the Heroic Indian Woman, the first Indian convert to Christianity; Duchess de la Vallière, a lovely woman of the Court of Louis XIV; Maria Theresa, Queen of Austria and Hungary; Catherine II. of Russia; Florence Nightingale, an Angel of Goodness.

The biographical sketches are from the accomplished pen of Mary Cowden Clarke, whose “Shakspeare Concordance” has made her, also, one of the “world-noted women.” I will

not undertake to describe the beauty of these faces, the fineness of the engravings, or the elegance of the binding; but only hope that all your readers (yourselves included) may be treated to the beautiful treasures I have mentioned, between now and New-Year's, and be made as happy by them as I am.

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The first fashionable party since the “suspension” came off last evening. It was a regular old-fashioned jam; with Monck's band to supply the music, and champagne and oysters *ad infinitum* in the supper-room. The ladies were beautiful, brilliant, and richly dressed; looking as happy as children just let out of school. It was really like a carnival after Lent; and—we didn't go home till morning!

But one of the most remarkable jams of the season, in quantity and quality, was at the Academy of Music yesterday, where we had the third of a series of opera *matinées.* Imagine the congregation of three or four thousand women and children, with here and there one of our *opposites* sprinkled in; and listen to the canary-like chatter and twitter between the acts! “Trovatore” was splendidly performed; and the enthusiasm was unbounded. But I am sorry to hear that there is trouble among the artists; and fear the doors of the Academy will again be closed. The manager proposes a reduction of salaries; La Grange and d'Angri “come down” beautifully; but the subordinates stick out —like beggars who complain of starvation, and refuse the half loaf offered them. If the opera goes on, we are to have “Robert,” and Herr Formes a week from Monday. He is a tremendous *basso profundo.* If the wind is fair and the night clear, you may hear him in Boston!

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LETTER No. XVIII.

New-York, *December* 21, 1857.

My Dear —:

New-York is brightening up, and putting on its holiday face. The fancy shops are looking spruce about the doors, and the windows are filled with the usual variety of comical conceits. Santa Claus is the reigning deity of juvenility. No wonder they think him the first and best of “saints.” The weather is wondrous fine; while, in England, it has been unusually severe since the middle of November. Our “out-of-door poor” need not shiver, even in their rags.

Dinner parties just now are prevalent; and tomorrow the New-Englanders remember their ancestors, at the Astor and the Everett: at the former, with a dinner and speeches; at the latter, with a dance and a supper. How one can manage to “do justice” to both, and “assist” at the grand “Poor Ball” at the Academy, is a rather puzzling question. But we shall do our best, and the reporters will do the rest.

I suppose the oratorio of “The Creation” was better rendered at the Academy, on Saturday evening 277 last, than ever before in America. It was, in every respect, a grand success. But I confess that I do not like these famous oratorios. They attempt too much; and the sublimity of the music often treads upon the absurdity of the idea. The conception of the Creation; the story of the Messiah—who can set them to music? Who can assume the *role* of the Father or of the Son? There is blasphemy in the suggestion; and I have either too much or too little veneration to appreciate even the massive masterpiece of the great Haydn.

Our New-York millionaires are doing big things for the fine arts. Mr. Belmont has brought home a gallery of rare works (now on exhibition for a charitable purpose), among which are some of the finest productions of Paul Delaroche, Horace Vernet, Robert Fleury, Meissonnier, Chavet, Rosa Bonheur, Charles Louis Muller, Gallett, Leys, Zoyon, Verlat, Leopold Robert, Theodore Rousseau, Trayer, Louis Meyer, De Brackleer, Shelfhout and Ommeganck. And Mr. W. H. Aspinwall has sent home a magnificent Murillo (the Immaculate Conception), a reproduction, on a smaller scale, of the picture for which the French government paid Marshal Soult one hundred and twenty-five thousand, dollars. Mr.

Aspinwall's cost thirty thousand. He is having two large galleries 13 278 built in the rear of his house, and intends to fill them both, one with ancient, and the other with modern paintings, during his sojourn in Europe.

The frequenters of our theatres may be congratulated on the appearance of a new star at Wallack's, in that loveliest of all shapes—a handsome woman. Beauty upon the stage is so exceedingly rare, that it affords one something more than artistic pleasure to see a fine specimen of living statuary gracefully undulating before the foot-lights. Mrs. John Wood possesses many of the rarest requisites of a great actress. She has a figure satisfactory to the most fastidious eye; a remarkably sculpturesque bust; beautifully rounded arms, with dimples at the elbows; dainty “determinations downwards;” hair abundant, and as black as the raven's wing; eyes a little blacker; a rich, creamy complexion; lips cherry-ripe and sensuous; an Anna Bishop style of nose, slightly uppish, with nostrils expanded and spirited; teeth as white and as regular as the rows upon an ear of Indian corn; a voice of rare richness and flexibility; and an *altogetherness* of person and manner that is decidedly taking.

In Walcott's ludicrous burlesque of “Hiawatha,” she is the life and soul of the play; singing, dancing, 279 talking, acting, running races, and running mad with the most bewitching *abandon.* In the doleful ditty, where she laments the suspicious absence of her sailor-lover, “only nineteen years old,” Mrs, Wood brought down the house. Excepting Burton's “Villikins and his Dinah,” it is the most “effective” exhibition of the melancholy-comic humor we have witnessed for many a year. I have but one criticism to make on Mrs. Wood's toilette; and that I will but gently touch, and hand the subject over to Dibblee, who has had La Grange's tresses in training for the last year. I allude to her peculiar style of wearing her hair. It is neither artistic nor becoming; but it seems to be a chronic habit with her—as it is “stuck up” in the same way, and stereotyped in her portraits in the shop-windows; a picture, by the way, which is by no means flattering, especially about the eyes, which are

represented as small, sleepy, and orientally indolent, whereas in the original they are, “on the contrary, quite the reverse.”

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LETTER No. XIX.

New-York, *December* 16, 1857.

My Dear —:

By kind permission of the Boston *Transcript* (as theatrical stars say when they pay their managers an “L” for allowing them to play elsewhere for a “C”) I shall be most happy to sun my feathers occasionally in the genial eyes of your *Pic* uliar readers. Of course they will not expect politics, or business, anything but a sort of rattling *Belle-letter* from me, who seldom see Wall-street, never enter Tammany Hall, and always skip the doings and misdoings in Congress, But I sometimes take a stroll down Broadway, a drive on the Avenue, make and receive any number of “reception-calls,” always go to the opera, and occasionally to church. So you may be pretty sure I am well posted in the fashions and frivolities, the fun and the philosophy of all that's going on in the social hemisphere above the *demi-monde.*

Just now we are all talking of and preparing for the “Grand Charity Ball,” to be given at the Academy on the 22d inst. I am a little sorry that it comes off on that day, as I have been counting on listening to (behind the scene) the New-England 281 Dinner speeches, at the Astor House. I like to see two hundred and fifty jolly Yankees smoking, drinking, singing, and spouting to the glorification of their forefathers, foremothers, and themselves! But I cannot forego the ball. There fashion and charity meet and kiss each other; and dance all night to the music of Dodworth, and to the tune of $8,000 to $10,000, for the “Woman's Asylum.” Besides, we can read the New-England speeches in the next day's papers; but the sayings and doings at the Academy can never be fully reported.

There has been an effort on the part of one of the morning papers to make the “Charity Ball” a *fiasco;* but the “bearing,” to borrow a Wall-street word from brother Bob, has produced a decidedly favorable reaction. There will be about five thousand tickets sold, at two dollars each, and the expenses will not exceed two thousand. Again, it will give employment to an army of dress-makers, who are suffering for want of occupation; while dealers in gloves, flowers, dry goods, &c., will be largely benefited by the preparation disbursements.

But this noble charity, this “Asylum for Women,” which appeals to our better sympathies in this invitation to a beautiful festival—do the public know what it is? Have these gay and generous young 282 gentlemen, who are so actively engaged in selling tickets, paused to consider what miseries will be mitigated, what sufferings relieved, what lives, if not souls, saved by the beds, the homes, the nursings and the comfortings provided by these blessed charities? Perhaps not; but a good deed, even thoughtlessly done, never goes unrewarded. Our city, especially at this inclement season, is full of suffering; and the deepest grief, and the keenest pangs, are always borne in silence. The raggedest, the wretchedest beggar never appears in the streets; but starves and dies unseen, unheard, in his garret or cellar. And so with the poor woman, the victim of poverty and wrong; diseased in body, blighted in soul, she does not always, nor even usually, flaunt her distress in the public eye. In proportion to her sensitiveness and shame, is the poignancy of her grief, and the silence of despair. The midnight moans that pain the ear of heaven are never heard by the lodger in the next room; and the scalding tear, that touches the heart of God, never falls on a human bosom—is never seen by a human eye. It is for these mute sufferers, these weeping, these love-wrecked Magdalens, who are longing to wash some saviour's feet with tears, that our “Woman's Asylum” opens its doors of hope and salvation. How can any man, 283 with half a heart, turn his back or “throw cold water” on a charity like this?

Last evening I found myself in a “novel situation”—dining on board a yacht, with a party of gentlemen from the Now-York Hotel, including my excellent friend and host, Cranston, who

most gallantly chaperoned your “fair correspondent” to and from the place where she lay —the yacht Wanderer, one of the largest and finest ever built. She belongs to that princely gentleman, Col. John Johnson, who is about to depart in her, with a select party of friends, for a three-months' pleasure trip to the Sunny South; and I suppose, in about thirty days, you will hail the Wanderer with three cheers and a great gun in the “Crescent City.” She is of about two hundred and fifty tons, and perfect in all her appointments. Her berths are broad beds, and her settees luxurious lounges. The dinner yesterday was sumptuous, even to the dainty tastes accustomed to New-York Hotel fare. It consisted mainly of oyster soup, terrapin, *filet de bæuf* , canvas backs, roasted and broiled (the broiled for me, if you please), champagne, sherry, coffee, cigars, *eau de vie* , and— *poker!* How I would like to embark in the beautiful Wanderer, on her southerly voyage, in such company, with only one more, whom it would be a profanation 284 to name. Alas! that we should always be sighing for that “one more,” for the sweet companionship of “the love that Fate forbids” to us—“poor *wanderers* on life's stormy sea!”

I have just been reading a book that is really more, charming than a novel. It is the “Life of Aaron Burr,” written by Jim Parton—Fanny Fern's “Jim.” The subject of the volume is fascinating, if not heoric; and the biographer has shown him up *con amore.* Burr has always had the reputation of being irresistible among the weaker-minded—stronger-passioned sex. Some men seem to be fatally gifted with a sort of magnetism that takes right hold of us; and we can no more get away from it than a falling apple can overcome the law of gravitation. We all, I suppose, must fall, like “our first parents,” when the hour of *our* temptation comes. It comes to woman only, with infinite love and infinite trust. Alas! that such reliance should so often and so fatally fail. Burr was a handsome man, with a bright intellect, a glittering eye, and electric passions. His love for his lovely daughter, Theodosia, and hers for him, is one of the rarest romances in history. There is a passion in her devotion which quite puzzles me. But perhaps I have yet to learn what it is, at once, to love and venerate the same being—a homage worthy of a God.

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P. S.—If my letter is a little too sombre, it is because the day is cloudy, and the "Wanderer," like a departed joy, is occasionally sailing into my memory.

LETTER No. XX.

New-York Hotel New-York, *Dec.* 23, 1857.

My Dear —:

Last night's sayings, doings, seeings, and feelings, furnish an abundance of "raw material" to weave into a "yarn" as long as from this to New-Orleans; but after spinning through two grand balls, immediately following a two hour dinner session, one scarcely feels like spinning through a newspaper column. But my promise is made, and we women always keep our words—when we can! And no finite being can do more than that. (Bunsby!)

To begin with the "Pilgrim Dinner," the celebration of the 237th anniversary of the landing of the Puritans at Plymouth. The glorification was complete. The tables were crowded. General Stetson and his aids even found difficulty in finding room for all who venerated their ancestors to the tune of seven dollars a plate. It was a fine sight to one who looked on from "behind the arras." The famous 13* 286 banquet hall of the "Astor" was lighted a *giorno* , as we say in Italy. The longlines of tables laughed (not "groaned") beneath their cornucopious burthens. And when the two hundred and fifty handsome New England heads entered the room, animated by the music of Dodworth's band, and the cheering prospect so bountifully and beautifully spread before them, I declare I never saw a finer-looking body of men—broad-fronted, bright-eyed, and remarkably erect gentlemen. The "House of Representatives" at Washington makes a poor show, in point of manly, intellectual, energetic force, compared with this congress of active, educated, go-a-head New Englanders. And here are the merchants, the journalists, the authors, and the orators, whose names are known, and whose influence is felt, wherever civilization has

gone. We can hardly say as much of the “body of members” who tinker at law-making at Washington.

The after-dinner speeches were all too long—the universal fault. Why don't they adopt the five-minute rule? And, why don't the speakers study the art of condensation, and give us acres of roses in a drop of *attar?* Mr. William M. Evarts, a man of intellect, “all compact,” gave us a learned, statesman-like, yet heavy dissertation on the theory of government in general, and the government of Kansas in 287 particular; and the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher “spread himself” upon the New-England clergy. Mr. Beecher spoke louder, and perspired more than any other speaker of the evening; but the most memorable thing that fell from his lips, was a dogma to which I cannot subscribe. In vindicating the propriety of discussing secular themes in the pulpit, he said that, “as a child, passing through the baptismal fount, came out pure and sacred, so any topic introduced into the pulpit became thereby consecrated.”

The “Press” at the New England Dinner was seasonably toasted, and well represented by the veteran Gen. Webb, of the Courier and Enquirer, a noble-looking man, upon whose large head the “almond tree” is in full blossom. But where were the rest of the leading journalists of the city, who are all, with one single exception, men of New England origin? Where were Greeley, Brooks, Bryant, Halleck, Raymond, and Fuller? At the grand “Poor Ball,” at the Academy, I suppose; so, after listening a moment to “Young America,” we will look in there, too.

When the tedious routine of the “regular toasts” had been gone through with—always more or less of a martyrdom—the President, fixing his eye on a remarkably handsome Byronic-looking young gentleman, proposed a “sentiment” containing some facetious allusion to “the Train—the fast Train,” recently 288 arrived after a five years' run of a hundred and sixty thousand miles. The “party alluded to,” as Mrs. Partington says, promptly sprung to his feet, and opened a rattle of musketry of hard names that was “perfectly stunning.” In about five minutes this “lightning Train” took us around the globe,

stopping at every place worth seeing; and at every place showing us a live Yankee as the leading man of the town. It was a brilliant scintillation; but as utterly unreportable as the flitting exhibitions of the aurora borealis. George Francis Train—the representative, as well as the author of “Young America,” is a phenomenal man.

The ball at the Academy was a brilliant affair. Some four thousand tickets were sold at $2 each, and the expenses only about $2,000, leaving some =6,000 for the Poor Woman's Hospital. There was a rare and radiant mingling of all classes, from the fresh tulips of the Bowery to the pale japonicas of the Fifth Avenue. But the “combination of colors” and forms and odors produced no offence or discord. The scene, although kaleidoscopic, was smiling and joyous upon the surface, whatever may have been the secret bitterness or darkness of that hidden current alluded to by the poet—

“How oft the laughing brow of joy A sickening heart conceals”

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“Who was the belle?” Do you ask? To this question there would be as many different responses as there were present beaux, as every lady probably had a special admirer at her side, or more modestly *worshiping her beauty at a “respectful distance.”* The dresses, as a general rule, were exceedingly tasteful, and seldom extravagant; while bare arms and bare busts were evidently not considered *bon ton.* But at private parties, I confess that we are somewhat less chary of our “beauty spots.” A private entertainment, however, is one thing, but a public exhibition is quite another.

As my gallant companion was determined to “show me round,” I was compelled to leave the Academy at the early hour of two, and go to the ball at the “Everett,” where the young New England Association wound up the exercises of the day at about four o'clock in the morning. Seeing only the ravelled (or revelled) end of the Everett House festival, I cannot speak of it except as a lady with a “sweet little foot,” viz.: “All's well that ends well.” And

now, with the “ancient mariner's” longing for sleep, the “gentle thing beloved from pole to pole,” I must close my eyes and this together.

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LETTER No. XXI.

New-York, *April* 6, 1858.

My Dear —:

Fourteen weeks of absence from this noisy, restless, surging sea of a city, afford time enough for many changes. It was winter then, and a December snow-storm accompanied us from New-York to Washington. It was the day after Christmas; and our party of three (Mackay, “Young America,” and I), were wrapt in shawls, and in dreamy reminiscences of the gatherings, the partings, and the festivities of that most hallowed and gracious season of blessings and benedictions. Now, it is spring; and the warm April sunshine and showers alternate as fitfully, and as innocuously as the gushing smiles and tears upon the face of childhood. Then, the commercial panic, the suspended banks, and the sufferings and threatenings of the unemployed poor, were the ruling topics of the hour. Now, it is religious revivals; the *bal masqué,* and the Musard concerts at the Academy. The season has changed; business has changed; pleasure has changed; and the fashions have changed. But there have been sadder changes than these. There are 291 missing faces, young and old, fair and noble, that I meet no more. The young bride, whose brilliant nuptials gave us a holiday but a few months since, making a whole neighborhood glad in sympathy with her joy, has vanished like a beautiful flower, cut down with the dew of the morning on its cheek.

“Day dawned—within a curtained room, Filled to faintness with perfume, A lady lay at point of doom. Morn broke—an infant saw the light; But for the lady, fair and bright, She slumbered in undreaming night!”

And children, too, the sweetest little buds upon the Tree of life, have perished by “death's untimely frost,” and childless fathers and mothers have grasped my hands with tearful eyes and speechless tongues. Of other changes—and there are always changes still sadder than death—from health into sickness—from wealth into poverty—from innocence into sin—from virtue into vice—from love into indifference—I dare not write, nor even think.

Touching this religious excitement, like the raging of an epidemic, the people in the country hear more about it than we do in the city. I do not perceive that the places of amusement are any less crowded, or that Broadway wears a less gay aspect than usual. It would be a very delightful thing to 292 find the spirit of Christ, as exemplified in his “Sermon on the Mount,” and in all his benignant words and works, serenely beaming from every human face we meet. But where there is one gentle, loving face on which is legibly written, “ *I want religion* ,” I see a thousand hard, metallic countenances on which are graven, in deep lines of corrugated care, “ *I want money.* ”

There is no doubt that people, in moments of serious reflection, suddenly open their eyes, like Saul on his way to Damascus, to the errors and follies of their lives. But the general rule is, that the murderer of yesterday cannot really be thus suddenly transformed into the saint of to-day; that a good character is of gradual growth; that the kingdom of heaven is not taken by violence.

And yet, if these prayer-gatherings and praise-shoutings make men better natured, better mannered, better hearted, let them pray on. If they bring more of the common sunshine of human sympathy into their hearts and homes, let them pray on. If they make better citizens, truer husbands, gentler wives, and more affectionate brothers, sisters, and friends, pray let them pray on. But if I remember rightly, the only two public prayers ever uttered by the Author of Christianity were exceedingly brief 293 and comprehensive: “Our Father which art in Heaven,” and “Father forgive them;” while it was his words of kindness

and his works of benevolence that were numerous; from which some may well take the hint, to pray less and do more.

From the prayer-meeting to the gay and fashionable world. As I have already stated, the forthcoming grand masked ball at the Academy of Music is a prominent theme of discussion. And there are very decidedly two sides to the question. The pious portion of the community is shocked at the audacity of “the indefatigable Ullman,” in attempting to import an entertainment so entirely French, and so utterly foreign to our social organism; and I am inclined to think the more tonnish of the fashionable world will also set their faces against the mask. According to the programme, only ladies can appear *incog.* , giving them a most unfair advantage over the gentlemen. And no lady can be admitted unless accompanied by a gentleman, who, of course, must be responsible for her respectability. I anticipate, therefore, a very proper, and a very tame affair. But still, your “fair correspondent” proposes to be there, and, may be, she will bother the black coats as much as she has some of your readers.

The opera has closed, and the manager comes out 294 sixteen thousand dollars ahead. Fry's “Leonora” was played two nights to fair houses, and was much applauded. The melodies are very sweet; the instrumentalism enthusiastic and massive. As the first great work of an American composer, it should have had a run; and Fry should have been crowned with gold. But he will have a handsome monument after he is dead. The world is too jealous of cotemporaneous genius to do much for the living. Its greatest and best men have been starved, neglected, and ill-treated. What's the use of being great and good? It don't pay *here!*

The spring fashions are gay, and crinoline is still exuberant; although slightly subsiding the Fifth Avenue. The broadest skirts, now, emerge from equivocal localities. The bonnets are little beauties, but fearfully costly, increasing in price as they diminish in size. To maintain the first position in the ranks of extravagance, it is necessary to “sport” a fifty dollar hat!—an item that goes hard with some of our famished purses. And yet, I should add that the

most lovely lady in New-York *makes her own bonnets* , and nobody knows it except the few who are in the secret, while everybody admires her graceful toilette and the elegance of her *ensemble.* By the way, I have just learned that the cause of all 295 the recent commercial difficulties is to be found in the one sweet item of sugar. It is stated that the importations of last year amounted to about $40,000,000, against some $13,000,000 of the preceding year, making an appalling difference in “the balance of trade.” Why don't the planters of your saccharine State go to work and raise enough for “home consumption?” Please excuse the seeming unseemliness of a question in political economy coming from

LETTER No. XXII.

New-York, *April* 9, 1858.

My Dear —:

Mr. George William Curtis, the well known author, delivered a lecture last evening on woman's rights and wrongs. It was the second in the course, got up by a few benevolent ladies for the benefit of the shirt sewers, thousands of whom have been thrown out of employment by the universal introduction of the sewing machines. Mozart Hall was filled, and the lecture was, in several respects, a remarkable production. Mr. Curtis is a young man, of superior 296 intellect, and of a rare poetic temperament. His personal appearance, manners and voice are all that can be desired in a public speaker—easy, earnest, eloquent. Waldo Emerson has evidently been his model, both in style and thought, but his elocution is much more effective. In his discourse last evening there were some passages of great beauty and startling force. His description of the miserable multitude of poor women, “between whom and death or dishonor there was but a *needle's point* , and even this small defence had been stolen from them by the cunning hand of science,” produced a great sensation. But the lecturer offended a portion of his audience by dragging in the most ultra notions of the Abolitionists, commending in the most extravagant terms, “one poor negro woman, who had seven times crossed the fiery lines of slavery, and rescued

each time a victim, plucked like a brand from the burning; and God grant that she may be successful in saving seventy times seven!" At this open advocacy of negro stealing, there was some little hissing, which was answered by the speaker when the tumultuous applause would allow him to proceed with the ready and stale allusion to the "goose," &c. The audience was a peculiar one; and, familiar as I am with New-York faces, I recognized but one lady and not 297 more than three or four gentlemen whom I had ever seen before.

Free suffrage for women, was the practical argument of the lecture. If women are equally interested with men in the welfare of society, and allowed to vote as stockholders in railroad and other corporations, why should they not have a hand in politics, and exercise their pure judgments and sweet influence at the ballot box? Mr. Curtis predicted that this would be at no distant day. "The children were already born who would live to go hand in hand with their wives and sisters to the polls, as they now accompany women to school, to the theatre, and to the church!" Mr. Curtis also went in strong for female physicians; and insisted that Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell was as competent to attend the sick, especially of their own sex, as Mott, or Francis, or Gray.

I have devoted some space to Mr. Curtis and the bold enunciation of his novel views, because his performance of last evening is "bound to make a talk." The strong-minded women have found in "the Howadji" an eloquent and efficient champion. To me, many of his suggestions are as repugnant as they are startling. I know women *have* transcended, occasionally, the "spheres" ordinarily assigned them in 298 the social economy. They have written books, spoken in the forum, painted pictures, carved statues, sailed ships, commanded armies, and wielded the sceptre of empires. But these are exceptional cases. Genius, like the angels, knows no sex. The truest, the best, and the sweetest women I know, sigh for nothing like this. *To be loved* , truly, honorably, nobly, is the life-long cry of their souls. And to be loved, they are ever striving to make themselves lovely. A happy home is the heaven of their earthly ambition; and when the rougher half of creation will secure them *this* , the world will hear little clamor from female lips about woman's rights, or

wrongs. The cradle has more charms than the ballot box; and the influence exerted *there* has more to do with the destinies of nations, than the suffrage exercised at the polls.

I have news to-day, from “the other side,” of the progress of the Leviathan. Nearly two thousand workmen are now employed upon her, and it is confidently expected that she will arrive at Portland about the first of July. Her state-rooms will be parlors, her berths double beds, her saloon a grand ball-room; and a newspaper will be regularly printed on board. If her trip is successful, there will be an 299 immense party ready to return in her. People who are tired of watering-places will seek a new sensation n life on board the Leviathan.

LETTER No. XXIII.

New-York, *April* 16, 1858.

My Dear —:

The failure and abandonment of the Collins Line of Steamers is not only regarded as a national calamity, but a great loss to the commercial interests of New-York. These magnificent vessels have been the pride and glory of our commercial marine. As models of naval architecture, they have never been surpassed; and for speed and comfort, they still remain unrivaled. It is sad to see these noble vessels lying dismantled at our wharves; while the rival Cunarders are taking the great bulk of the business out of our hands. For less than the cost of one, the mortgagees (Messrs. Brown Brothers,) have got possession of the Adriatic, the Baltic, and the Atlantic; and their agent, Captain Comstock, is trying to dispose of them in France, or failing there, to find a purchaser in Philadelphia, or Virginia, or elsewhere. I am not surprized that the originator of the great 300 enterprize feels broken-hearted; or that he bitterly complains at the indifference of the Government and the conduct of the Browns.

The line has been most extravagantly managed; and we shall probably soon see a report that will startle the public, and astonish the stockholders. The Browns being interested

in the “Novelty Works,” secured the appointment of Mr. Allen (of the firm of Stillman, Allen, & Co., the proprietors of the Novelty Foundry,) as engineer-in-chief of the line. The machinery of the ships was always needing repairs; and the gross payments to the Novelty Works have exceeded the astounding sum of fourteen hundred thousand dollars! And yet I am assured by one who knows, that if the machinery had been made of “the best material,” according to the letter and spirit of the contract, the cost of repairs would have been comparatively trifling. A shaft made of the best iron has never broken—cannot be broken.

When Congress made its last appropriation to the line for carrying the mails, Mr. Wetmore, Corcoran, Mr. Riggs, and other original stockholders sold out—some at par, others at a discount of from ten to twenty-five per cent.—a fortunate escape from total loss. The present stockholders (except the Browns) of course lose all. But it is a mistake to 301 suppose that the great rival lines of the Cunards, with all their Government patronage, has made money. They owe a debt of four millions of dollars; and notwithstanding the money invested in their numerous ships, if compelled to sell, like Collins, under the sheriff's hammer, that, too, would prove a most disastrous enterprise. In the mean time the Havre line seems to prosper; and Commodore Vanderbilt also manages to keep his flag afloat without the aid of post-office patronage. The “Atlantic Ferry” needs reorganizing; and there must either be a competition between the Government of England and the United States, or an opposition fight between companies or individuals. The indefatigable Vanderbilt, I think, is preparing to “defy competition,” and we may look for lower fares and greater speed across the Atlantic than has ever been known. The tide of travel is now setting strongly towards Europe, and every steamer goes out full. The New-Yorkers are going over in crowds.

The Rev. Mr. Chapin produced a decided sensation last evening, by delivering a very eloquent lecture to a very crowded house on “Woman and her Work.” It was a thrilling discourse, unexceptionable in matter and manner, and ought to be printed and circulated as a “tract for the times.” It did not contain 14 302 a sentiment nor an assertion that the

most conservative citizen or Christian could object to. Mr. Chapin is a sound, healthful man, who is not afraid to write a sermon with a good cigar in his mouth, nor to tell his people that he don't believe in a literal hell of fire and brimstone. He insists that women have a right to live, a right to work, and that society, in driving them to starvation and dishonor, has a great sin to answer for. On looking in at Stewart's this morning, and seeing a hnndred able-bodied men, some of them six feet and well proportioned, selling gloves, laces, ribbons, and hose to a crowd of ladies, I could not help thinking that there was a little usurpation here of the employment that belongs to woman. The fact is, something has got to be done for the suffering sisterhood who belong to nobody, whom nobody will marry, and nobody employ. These thousands of idle, delicate fingers are willing to work, but the “right of the stronger” rules them out of almost every department of paying industry. The sewing-machine has stolen away the needle, and the doors of the printing-office, the post-office, and the retail stores, are all shut in their famished faces. What is to be done? To this question, I fear the answer will be but an empty echo. In the meantime, 303 there is room for half a million of unemployed women in the pleasant vino lands of Ohio and Missouri.

LETTER No. XXIV.

New-York, *April* 30, 1858.

My Dear —:

These are “moving times” in New-York, when hundreds of families are “casting their shells,” some for better and some for worse; some going up, others going down. The late commercial disasters have caused some sad changes. Men who built palaces in the Fifth Avenue, where they fondly hoped their families might live for life, in elegance and luxury, have been compelled to sell out at a sacrifice, and take lodgings in less fashionable and less sumptuous quarters. This is a hard experience, especially for young wives and ambitious daughters.

On or about the first of May we look for a sweeping demolition of old buildings and unsightly shanties, and to see their sites quickly covered by new and ornamental structures. It has been generally supposed that there would be less tearing down and building up this year than usual, in consequence of 304 the great commercial embarrassments, which have considerably depreciated rents in certain portions of the city. But it is not so. The abundance of unemployed money compels capitalists to invest in buildings, almost against their judgment. Our city banks now hold about thirty-five millions of specie; trade is unusually dull; importations light; and the rate of interest lower than it has been for years. Labor and lumber are abundant; and unimproved property is a costly encumbrance—no property at all, except for purposes of taxation. So the owners of lots, with balances in bank, must go to work and build houses and stores, and trust for better times to rent them profitably.

The bankrupt bill now before Congress, which Mr. Toombs is engineering in the Senate, and Gen. Ward, of this city, in the House, is exciting a good deal of interest among the multitude of broken merchants, who have their headquarters in Nassau-street, where they have opened a regular suit of rooms, and employ a corps of writers to prepare articles, and to manufacture public opinion in favor of the law, which is now before the Judiciary Committee, and will probably be presented to the Senate early next week. It will be a general bill, including individuals, corporations, chartered banks, and any association 305 of persons authorized to issue notes, bills, &c. It will provide for voluntary and involuntary bankruptcy, and will be retroactive. The retroactive feature will be guarded so as to exclude all who, subsequent to January last, or any other time, have made assignments, in contemplation of the passage of a bankrupt law, which gave preference to one creditor over another; and the bankrupt in such cases shall not receive a discharge unless with the consent of a majority of his creditors who have not been so preferred. The involuntary bankruptcy applies to cases where the debts exceed two thousand dollars, and the person declared bankrupt is entitled to trial by jury—all transfers of property of any kind, for the purpose of giving any creditor, endorser, or other person, any preference or priority over

general creditors, to be null and void, and the parties obtaining them to be sued for such amount as assets of the bankruptcy. With regard to banks and other issuers of paper money, they are to come under the head of involuntary bankrupts; and, in addition to all the liabilities which attach to individuals, they may be declared bankrupt for the non-payment for ten days after demand of any bill, note, or other liability—all the expenses of the proceedings to be paid by the parties interested, and under no pretence 306 to be paid by the United States. These are the general features of the bill. It is to go into effeet next November, if now passed.

As a matter of justice, not to say of mercy, to the thousands who are struggling for life with a millstone of debt about their necks, such a bill should pass without delay. It will prevent the “suspension” of solvent banks, and do away with the swindle of the “preferred creditor” system. When a man fails in business, and gives up all he has for an equal distribution among his creditors, the law of trade, the law of society, and the law of humanity, should be satisfied. Such a code is inculcated in that model petition to the Highest Court—“Forgive us our debts as we (should) forgive our debtors.”

The “Dramatic Fund Association” have held their annual meeting, without the annual dinner; and over a very fine collation, at “The Metropolitan,” made a very favorable report of their receipts and disbursements. Over ten thousand dollars have been devoted to charities during the year. Jas. T. Brady, Esq., the President, takes a great interest in the “Association;” and John Brougham, a warm friend of the cause from the beginning, has donated to 307 the “Fund” certain real estate property in the West, which, in the course of twenty years, can hardly fail to be worth a hundred thousand dollars. By the way, I am authorized to state that Mr. Brougham has been converted to Christianity; and will *not* quit the stage.

LETTER No. XXV.

New-York, *May* 31, 1858.

My Dear —:

The musical *dilettanti* of our city have been treated to a rare entertainment—a private opera, privately performed in one of the most aristocratic mansions of University Place, the residence of Dr. Thomas Ward, the author of the words and music, and one of the leading performers of his own charming production. The title of the opera is “Flora; or, The Gipsy's Frolic.” It is in three acts, and the scene is laid in France, in the time of Louis the XIV. The plot is romantic and pretty; the characters numerous and the action lively. The following is the cast: 308

Lady Flora Miss Alice Goodrich.

Marie Miss Kittie Ward.

Count Ernest Mr. Van Zandt.

Popinjay Dr. Ward.

Dame Popinjay Mrs. Powell.

Jacques Mr. Montgomery.

Annette Mrs. Rosalie Riggs.

Claude Mr. W. H. Cooke.

Gipsy Girl Miss Olivia Sconcia.

Paul Mr. Baily.

Chorus of Peasants—Men and Women.

The opera has been given four times. Tickets of invitation were sent out as for an evening party, and at each representation there was a delighted and fashionable crowd. A stage was elegantly fitted up at the end of the spacious drawing-room, and on each occasion the spectators have numbered from three to four hundred. The piece was handsomely mounted, and the dresses of the performers, including the chorus, were exceedingly rich and tasteful. The leading artists would do credit to the Academy. Miss Sconcia dressed, looked, acted, and sang the roguish *role* of the Gipsy, charmingly. I have rarely heard so exquisite a voice. She is already a fullfledged prima donna, who would make a fortune and a *furore* in grand opera. Mr. Cooke, the tenor, has a very sweet and sympathetic voice; and Mrs. Riggs, as the village bride, was the most enchanting of coquettes, and the most delicious of singers. The 309 *Lady Flora* of Miss Goodrich (a daughter of “Peter Parley”) was a stately, dignified, and ladylike performance, and Dr. Ward, the basso, and Mr. Van Zandt, the baritone, sang and acted more like artists than amateurs. The poetry of the libretto is far above the average, and the music is too good for private monopoly. The serenade, which ends in a duett between the lovers, is a perfect gem of melody. *Claude* , with guitar accompaniment, sings under *Annette's* lattice:

Sleep, gentle maiden, I would not wake thee, Only thy slumbering thought would I guide; Dream that thy lover his passion is breathing, Drawn by the moonlight to mourn at thy side.

Hear me, yet wake not; scarce would my 'plaining Move you to doubt if you dream, or you hear; Softly as zephyr now sighs o'er your tresses, So would my murmuring creep to your ear.

Both:—The gentle moon looks mildly down, At her sweet gaze the vapors flee; Ah! thus, when clouds around me frown, Thy glance shall chase them, love, from me.

The night bird's song Calms nature's breast, So thy clear voice Soothes mine to rest. Ever, when moonlight Silvers the tree, Music from slumber Shall win me to thee, 14*

I have devoted some space to this most delightful private entertainment, which is hardly a subject for public comment; but as it happens to be just now the “town talk,” and as the performance has been already alluded to in several of the newspapers, there is no violation of “the proprieties” in mentioning these particulars. Every one (of the ten or twelve hundred persons) who has enjoyed the opportunity of witnessing Dr. Ward's production, is delighted with it; and there will be a strong effort made to induce him to give the public a chance to hear it, the proceeds to be appropriated to charitable purposes. It would fill the Academy as it never has been filled before. The house will be jammed.

We are having almost the first fine day for a month (Jupiter Pluvius has *reigned* incessantly since “May-day”); and, to confess the honest truth, New-York is hard up in the way of amusements, while the city is filling up with strangers. All the leading hotels are overflowing. Baron Hackett commences a short engagement to-night, at Laura Keene's, and a pleasant rumor says he is to be followed by M'me Stoepel (Mailda Heron). The Mormon extravaganza at Wallack's is drawing tremendous houses. It is a very trashy affair; but the short petticoats of Brigham's harem will insure the piece a long run.

The latest splurge in the way of newspaper advertisements, 311 is Barnum's stunning programme, in which the Prince of Humbugs proposes to bring out all the stars of Europe, *provided eight hundred* subscribers can be procured, at *one hundred* dollars each, for *twenty* performances! The thing can't be done. The great showman has lost his prestige, and his operatic stock will not be taken. The Americans are able and willing to pay liberally for a good thing, but they like to see it and test it first.

Strawberry parties and wedding parties are begin-to rage in the Fifth Avenue. Love comes with the roses:

“In the spring, a fuller crimson Comes upon the robin's breast; In the spring, the wanton lapwing Gets himself another crest; In the spring, a livelier iris Plays upon the burnished dove; In the spring, a young man's fancy *Lightly turns to thoughts of love.* ”

LETTER No. XXVI.

Cape May, *November* 11, 1857.

My Dear —:

People of quiet habits, and accustomed to domestic comforts, are tired of the rattle and clatter of over-crowded hotels; and disgusted with 312 the small “packing boxes,” called by courtesy “rooms,” with non-elastic beds, about as wide as a coffin; and a pillow like a pocket-handkerchief with a feather in it. To give up a city home with all the “modern improvements” (including the ever flowing and glorious Croton), where one may wander of a summer's night, through cool and spacious apartments in a primitive and luxurious simplicity of dress, for a cell in a watering-place hotel, can hardly be considered “a change for the better.” And then, too, our more fastidious classes are getting to be shy of watering-place society, especially mothers, who have marriageable daughters on their hands.

Never a “season” goes by that we do not hear of some “hair breadth” escapes from some horrible *messalliance* , if nothing worse. But I have not space to discuss the subject to-day. A little watering-place information is all I intended to give, and thus far can only speak from actual observation of Cape May, where there is a pretty large crowd of visitors, mostly from Philadelphia, Baltimore, and other Southern cities, with a small but brilliant sprinkling of New-Yorkers, with the witty, lively, and graceful Mrs. Oscar Coles as the central star. The hotels are all comfortably filled; and “Congress Hall” is overflowing.

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The great attractions of the Cape are cool air and fine bathing. During the three first days of the present week, it was cool enough in the breeze, even in the middle of the day, for thick clothing. Everybody goes in to bathe at about 11 o'clock in the forenoon, and with some two or three thousand persons on the beach at a time, in every variety of costume, and in all the colors of the rainbow, the scene is decidedly picturesque and peculiar.

There is one fashion prevailing at Cape May which has not yet been introduced at Newport. The ladies go into the water promiscuously with their “beaux,” making regular engagements, as for a dance, to meet them on the beach or among the breakers. There is one bright-eyed little gipsy from Baltimore, the belle of “Congress Hall,” who is “engaged ahead” for bathing as well as dancing during the remainder of the season; and sometimes, in order to keep the peace among her admirers, she has to bathe with three or four gentlemen of a morning, allowing each, by turn the felicity of floating or ducking her dear little figure. There is no lack of life among the “white caps,” to say nothing of the “mad caps” at Cape May.

If any of the readers of the Mirror are curious to see “sights to remember,” let them go on board one 314 of Commodore Coles' fine steamers, at 5 P. M.; and at a corresponding hour the next morning they will wake up at Cape May, and probably feel a little more widely waked up than usual. At all events, people in search of “new sensations” had better try the experiment.

Cape May is one of the “peculiar institutions,” and after taking time to arrange my reminiscences and to allay the “very pleasant wild goose motion” of the trip, I may return to the subject.

LETTER No. XXVII.

Union Hall, Saratoga Springs, *August* 16, 1857.

My Dear —:

Saratoga is crowded; perhaps never more so. The “United States” has about one thousand guests, in and out of the hotel; the “Union” eight hundred; “Congress Hall” six hundred; and all the minor hotels and boarding-houses are full to overflowing. The “season” has “set in” later than usual, owing, probably, to the remarkably moderate temperature of July; but it is expected that it will be proportionably prolonged. Fashion,

as usual, congregates 315 at the “States;” while quiet respectability recuperates at the “Union,” which is no longer the ultra pious house of former years, prayers in the drawing-room having given place to extemporaneous “hops,” in which the miscellaneous multitude nightly disport themselves, from the little ones who are taking their first steps, to the silver-gray veterans who are about taking their last. Dancing, indeed, is the only general amusement of the place, unless driving in a long and dusty procession to the Lake is considered an “amusement.”

The walks about the “Springs” are very fine, and usually thronged morning and evening; and the private park of Mr. Finlay, whose name is pleasantly associated with good wine, is a very attractive promenade. There are also excellent bands in each of the principal hotels, which give us *alfresco* concerts after dinner that are really worth listening to. The band at the “Union” is especially fine, almost equal to the “Germanians” at Newport, under Carl Bergmann. We have also two or three excellent amateur singers, who contribute generously and largely to the delights of the drawing-room. Among them, it will not be invidious to mention Mrs. Robertson, of Canada, whose linnet-like voice hushes the crowd into instant silence; and Miss Herndon, of our city, 316 whose sweet tones remind one of the music heard by Coleridge's “Ancient Mariner:”

“Sometimes adropping from the sky, I heard the sky-lark sing, And now all little birds that are, How they seemed to fill the sea and air, With their sweet jargoning.”

Of belles there is no lack, either in numbers or variety—dancing belles, flirting belles, dumb belles, dressing belles, and talking belles—the latter, perhaps, the rarest and best of all. But the question daily asked: “Who is *the* belle of the States?”—of the “Union?”—of the “Congress?”—of the “place?” I shall not venture to answer. It is one of those delicate and disputed questions about which, fortunately, “opinions differ.”

I suppose every woman, however ugly, is beautiful to somebody; while the one we love best is always the belle of our heart, if not of our eyes. But there are certain forms and

faces, to say nothing of a thousand indescribable charms and graces, that excite universal admiration. These cosmopolitan beauties are the flowers of creation. And we have a few such here, who add lustre to the brightest daylight; whose beauty is music addressed to the eye, and whose sweet accompaniments even women praise. But I will venture no further upon this 317 “inspiring theme” to-day—further particulars, perhaps hereafter.

LETTER No. XXVIII.

United States Hotel, Saratoga Springs, *August* 19, 1857.

My Dear —:

The somewhat monotonous life of this gay and fashionable “watering-place” was pleasantly relieved last evening by the introduction of what in theatrical phrase would be called a new and attractive change in the programme of amusements. We were treated to a series of “Tableaux Vivants,” got up in the most impromptu manner, and yet entirely successful, and, as the critics would say, “effective.” Indeed, the affair is the talk of the day, and may be chronicled as the great success of the season. All who took part in getting them up, prompters, managers, and performers, deserve the “thanks of the community,” for giving at least a thousand spectators an opportunity of feasting their eyes on the “Belles of the Season” dressed, posed and composed as pictures. Mrs. Hills and Mrs. Thayer of New-York, and Mr. Pepper and Mr. Fry of Philadelphia, started the idea in the morning; and in six hours costumes, characters, and all requisite accessories were ready. No special 318 invitations were given out, but it was whispered around among the hotels at the dinner table; and when nine o'clock came, the Hall of the “States” was besieged by an eager crowd; and as soon as the doors were opened the spacious saloon was thronged to excess. Monk's band was in attendance, who did the orchestral part between the changing scenes.

The following is the order in which the pictures were presented. I shall not attempt to describe or criticise them. Every presentation was a complete success; and everything passed off without a single *contretemps.*

1. Rebecca and Rowena—Miss Stone and Miss Cheatham.

2. Jeannie and Effie Deans in Prison—Miss Bayard and Miss Frazer.

3. Conrad and Gulnare—Mrs. Thayer and Mr. Montgomery.

4. Zuleika Presenting the Rose (A scene from the Bride of Abydos)—Miss Hull and Mr. Montgomery

5. Uncle Toby and the Widow Wadman—Mr Gerard and Mrs. Pember.

6. The Three Graces—Miss Smith, Miss Parker, and Miss Marshall.

7. Spanish Duenna Warning her Niece against 319 Lovers—Miss Winchester, Mrs. Pember, and Mr. Hutchinson.

8. Romeo and Juliet—The tomb scene—Miss Hull and Mr. Read.

9. Bride of Lammermoor—Miss Marshall, Miss Frazer, and Mr. Montgomery.

10. Day after Marriage—Mrs. Pember and Mr. Read.

11. Six Months after Marriage—The same.

12. The Finale.

In this last tableaux were grouped all the ladies who had taken part in the preceding ones; and it was a vision of beauty that made one hold his breath in a sort of bewilderment of admiration—like the first glance at Winterhalter's “ *Florinde* ” now on exhibition here. A

dozen young women, in all the dew of youth, exquisitely dressed, looking as fair as lilies, and as sweet as roses, presented a never-to-be forgotten picture. The sweet strains of a favorite prima donna were never more heartily applauded than the beaming beauties of this lovely group.

I know it would add interest to this tantalizing communication to draw comparisons, to describe dresses, and to touch a little more closely upon the personal attractions of the fair exhibitors. But I dare not venture upon such a delicate and dangerous task. Besides, a private woman is altogether too sacred 320 a subject to have her charms and graces discussed in the newspapers, like the points of a race horse or the lines of a yacht. So I will leave these beautiful “Tableaux” to the mental picture galleries of all who were so fortunate as to see them—and to the imaginations of the readers of the Mirror.

In a former letter, I mentioned among the sweet singers of the “United States” Miss Herndon, a daughter of Lieut. Herndon of the Navy. I am sorry to say she has left us; and her sweet warbling is sadly missed. But consolation to the lovers of music came to-day with the arrival of Miss Van Schoonhoven, from Troy, one of the most extraordinary amateur musicians in the country. She plays on some half-a-dozen different instruments, and is a whole orchestra in herself. She is quite young, fine-looking, sings like an artiste, and improvises music as though it were her most “natural language.” But the mail is closing, and so must I.

LETTER No. XXIX.

New-York, *September* 30, 1857.

My Dear —:

So you will insist on my “engagement.” Appalling word! and one that implies many duties and some 321 sacrifices, to say nothing of the responsibilities. But having pronounced the irrevocable “yes,” I am literally bound to go ahead, like other engaged ladies,

without apology, delay or repentance. I only insist on one condition viz: That the Mirror shall defend me from the *broad* charges of “Mary Forrest” and others, that your “fair correspondent” wears whiskers, and so forth. In the name of Heaven, can't a woman “suffer and be *strong* ” without exciting suspicion of her femininity!

But to the matter in hand. I have seen “ *The North Star* ” at the Academy—Meyerbeer's “North Star”—the “North Star” of the brilliant and bewitching La Grange; and I would like to see it and hear it seven times a week until Meyerbeer, or some one else, can give us something better. Like all grand operas, “The North Star” is made up of the common passions of our common humanity—a little religion, a good deal of love, and a liberal sprinkling of military glory. The opening scene represents a shipyard in Russia, with Peter the Big, (Amodio) at work with his hand-plane, “getting out stuff.” Presently, comes in his friend (Brignoli), selling his little cakes, when the chorus eats, drinks, and grows jolly. By and by “The Star” appears (La Grange), and Peter is decidedly smitten. In the midst of his lovemaking 322 a young lady about to be married (Madame Maretzek) rushes upon the scene in a state of terrible excitement, announcing the approach of the “Border Ruffians” (The Cossac Banditti). And lo! they come, shaggy, hairy and hideous. But the magic “Star,” who now assumes the guise and the arts of a gipsy, sings and jingles an old Cossac ditty (made familiar by Jenny Lind), which subdues the “savage breast,” and sends the grizzly chorus singing and dancing to their dens.

But Cattarina's brother (Quinto), who is betrothed to the belle of the village, is suddenly summoned to the wars: and alas, for the poor girl he leaves behind him! In this pressing emergency, the beautiful and heroic “Star” offers to don the soldier's habits, and take her brother's place in the ranks. The marriage goes on and comes off, and the curtain falls as Cattarina is rowed away, singing a parting benediction, as sad as the “Last Rose of Summer,” and somewhat suggestive of that lovely Swan song of the departing flowers. In the next act she appears in full feather as a soldier, and is posted as one of the sentinels by the royal tent. Catching a glimpse of her old flame, Peter, she throws away her gun; peeps through the curtain; sees what she ought not to see; becomes awfully jealous; slaps

her “superior officer” in the face, and is finally ordered to be shot 323 by her half drunk and half asleep lover. But Peter “comes to himself” in time to save her; and she, in turn, saves his life by revealing the plot on foot against him.

In the third and last act Cattarina loses her reason; and is only restored by Peter's love and Peter's flute in time to save the curtain from falling on a tragedy instead of a comedy. So much for the thread of the story. The music is better than the plot. The orchestral and choral portions have never been surpassed. I am not going to distribute personal praise among, the artists; but I wish to say a good word for the manager, who, in the brief space of two weeks has placed this great opera upon the stage, in a style only surpassed by its representation in Paris. Who but the indomitable Max could have accomplished so much in so brief a time?

And now “it gars me greet,” to think that the doors of ou beautful Lyric Temple are to be closed to-night-to rust on their hinges, while silence reigns within its walls. The Academy of Music has too many owners; and the lessee too many masters. If I were an Astor or an Empress, I would not only buy the Academy and let it, rent free; but endow it with a sinking fund to make up the deficit of an unsuccessful season. Who says I am not generous in my suggestions?

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LETTER No. XXX.

New-York, *October* 2, 1856.

My Dear —:

Cousin Lou has promised to take me the rounds of the theatres. Last night, I went to “WALLACK'S,” and had a tight squeeze to get in. The play was “London Assurance;” and hundreds who came late were compelled to go away, consoling themselves and the manager by purchasing tickets for this evening, when the same performance will be

repeated. The star of the piece and of the evening was Miss Agnes Robertson. What a perfect little jewel she is! Just about the size of the Venus, with feet not larger than a mouse; and ankles about as little as a baby's wrist. Petite and pretty, versatile and vivacious, cunning and coquettish, as Grace Harkaway she was perfectly charming. In addition to a figure as finished as a statue, and as much finer than a statue as the feminine human composition is finer, and fairer, and more delicate than marble, Miss Robertson possesses the rare beauty of dark hair and deep blue eyes, fringed with lashes that mitigate the brilliancy of their expression only to shed the more radiance upon her beaming face. And 325 then, too, she dresses like a picture, sings like a prima donna, and dances like a Bayadere. What a card for her manager; what a treasure for Mr. Bourcicault! In the funny farce of “The Young Actress,” she exhibited her best points, and quite bewitched the house.

But I am forgetting Bourcicault, the author of the play, and the representative of the part of Dazzle. He is a much younger-looking man than I expected to find the father of so many scores of dramatic children. I have but one thing to say of him, as he appears on the stage: He does nof *act* the part he presents; he *is* it. And as for the comedy of “London Assurance,” my only objection to it is this—that it is too highly peppered with profane expletives. As Bob Acres very justly remarks, “damns have had their day;” and if decent dictionary words are not sufficiently emphatic for dramatic expression, let the authors set their wits at work to invent a new vocabulary of interjections. But the play itself has sterling merit, and its satire upon fashionable snobbery is keen and cutting. Sir Harcourt, as the type of dissipated and dilapidated dandyism, is a character that will live upon the stage as long as men love to laugh at the faults and foibles of a bogus aristocracy—an artificial nobility. That of Dolly 15 326 Spanker is equally good in its way; a Spooney sprig of English upper ten-dom, who is courted and married by a gay and rakish woman for his purse and his title, and then hen-pecked into a thing of contempt. Every dashing young wife, who may be “distantly related to the Spankers,” should go to Wallack's, just to hear Mrs. Hoey, as Lady Gay, whistle for her poodle of a husband.

The character of Meddle, as personated by Blake, is as amusing as such a disgusting sneak can be. I confess that he made me laugh whenever he appeared; but my foot was aching to kick the rascal all the while. What a terrible (I hope not truthful) burlesque upon the profession of the law! And yet, cousin Lou says the city is full of just such scamps as Meddle; and what is worse, they worm their way to posts of honor and influence!

I haven't done with Wallack's; but I am interrupted, and have only time to add that Mrs. Hoey, as Lady Gay, “brought down the house,” as the critics say. She was dressed, for the dinner party, most magnificently, with a chain of real diamonds round her neck, and a head-dress fit for a queen.

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LETTER No. XXXI.

New-York, *October* 9, 1856

My Dear —:

There is something very attractive in beauty and fashion; and when talent and genius are superadded, the charm becomes irresistible. Mrs. de Wilhorst's second appearance before the New-York public, last evening, was greeted by a full and brilliant house. Niblo's elegant Saloon—the finest concert room in the city—never contained a more cultivated crowd. The miniature stage was beautifully fitted up, making just a nice picture frame for the pretty prima donna, whose modest yet composed appearance was hailed with warm and long applause. She was very richly dressed, but entirely without ornaments, looking more like a well-bred drawing-room lady than a popular public singer. Her manners were earnest and unexceptionable, and her execution of the most difficult pieces thoroughly artistic. What she lacks, to my ear, or rather to my heart, is enthusiasm, or sympathy; but this is a rare quality—the crowning gift of genius. It is genius; and without it, all music and poetry, and words of religion or love, are but sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. I do not mean 328

to say that Madame de Wilhorst is utterly devoid of this divine element, which places its possessor in instant communion with gods, angels, men, and devils, enabling the artist by quick volition to *be* the character he assumes; but her voice, although as pure as a flute, and as true as mechanism, lacks that indescribable tone which touches

—“the electric chain Wherewith we are darkly bound.”

I am inclined to think this sort of magnetism only comes with love and suffering. The passions must be experienced before they can be expressed. As the brave old German poet has it:

“Who hath not his bread in sorrow eat, He knows you not, ye Heavenly powers!”

Mrs. de Wilhorst, although but a novitiate, has already enough of art. Let her now pray for inspiration. The vocation she has adopted is one of the highest to which a woman can devote herself. The sphere she fills is but a little lower than that of the angels, who have nothing else to do but sing and love. The gift of song is a sacred gift—a talent not to be trifled with. Music is the highest possible form of expression; the vernacular, every-day language of heaven.

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LETTER No. XXXII.

New-York, *October* 9, 1857.

My Dear —:

Oh , this clear and glorious weather—these bright and beautiful days, linked together like a string of gold beads, a casket of precious coins of Time, dropped from the mint of Eternity! How shall I “improve the shining hours?” My “engagement” prompts me to write; my disposition inclines me to take a walk; so, as a sort of compromise between pleasure and duty (which I am too apt to make), I will scribble a little of what I saw, thought, &c., during

a delightful promenade in Broadway yesterday afternoon, with Cousin Lou. But “who and what is Cousin Lou,” I have been asked. Well, I dare not tell exactly; but he is just one of the nicest fellows in the world for a young lady to walk and talk with, who wants to be posted up on “matters and things in general,” from the doings of the Stock Exchange to the gossip of the drawing-rooms and green-rooms; and he seems to know all about what is going on in the fashionable, financial, and political world—to say nothing of the world within and the world above. He is young, too, and handsome; 330 patronizes Devlin, and crowns his locks with a Leary. Well, as I was walking down Broadway yesterday afternoon (I never walk below Canal-street), just as all the substantial business men were coming up, I met him (not by appointment, but by presentiment), and turned about and joined the up-stream current. After complimenting my new Ferrero hat and Brodie mantilla, which put me in a particularly good humor, and inviting me to go to the concert in the evening, which made me feel still happier, he began as usual by entertaining me with his comments, not on passing events, but passing people. “There,” said he, “comes George Sanders, the inventor of the steam guillotine, a substantial, iron-looking man, with a head as round and as hard as a cannon-ball, who looks as if Buchanan stock was up to-day; and as if he were bursting with a budget of good news from Pennsylvania, with which he will exhilarate his distinguished companions at the New-York Hotel dinner-table to-day.”

”And there comes Gov. Floyd, the late Governor of Virginia, and the son of a Governor. He is a rampant Buchanan man; but at the same time one of the ablest and most reasonable of the Southern politicians. In the event of Fremont's election, he will “submit,” and preach submission for his sweet 331 “Cousin Jessie's sake,” for whom he entertains the most chivalrous regard.

And not far behind him we meet another democratic magnate, Robert J. Walker, whose physical dimensions seem to be on an inverse scale to his mental greatness. “Good stuff in small vials,” Cousin Lou remarks; and says something about that bright-eyed little gentleman being the inevitable candidate for the Presidency in 1860. His “platform” will

provide for the annihilation of all custom-houses and post-offices, and the finishing of the Pacific Railroad, in case it is not completed under the coming administration.

The kaleidoscopic crowd passes on, with its ever-changing panorama of anxious and ugly, of smiling and beautiful faces; and lo, here comes “metal more attractive”—a lady as lovely as a lily.

Lou turns and gazes as she floats away as gracefully as a wreath of mist upon the surface of a rushing river, and is silent for the space of a couple of blocks; and then only mutters—

“Can such things be, and overcome us Like a summer's cloud, Without our special wonder!”

Just then I excused myself and went into a store, under the pretence of tying my shoe; for I wouldn't 332 give a fig for any man's company whose mind, like the dying gladiator's eyes, “are with his heart, and that is far away.”

The concert was charming. The splendid saloon was nearly filled, and the, ladies looked brilliant in their autumnal plumage. The artists were almost all encored, and the enthusiasm was warmer than one is accustomed to at the Academy. The “Brindisi,” from Rigoletto, was one of the gems of the evening. Signor Cessara was tumultuously called to repeat it. Between the acts, a beautiful niece of Mrs. Fremont sent a white bouquet of “Protestant Roses” to Madame La Grange, with the request that she would sing the “Last Rose of Summer;” but the orchestra had not the music, so the obliging artiste could only promise to sing it at the concert to-morrow evening. Won't I and everybody else be there?

After the concert, we “looked in” at Wallack's, just in time to hear the closing sentence of Bourcicault's speech, who was returning thanks for his “bumper” benefit. The “Phantom,” which followed, I did not like. It is a ghastly, ghostly affair, and sends one to-bed full of horrors. I think I have read the story in Dumas, or some other diabolical French book; but the stage version, I believe, is 333 claimed by the author of “London Assurance.” I don't

know how it may be with others, but for one, I go to the theatre to laugh, not to shudder; and I hate anything that smells of sulphur. And yet, perhaps, like all poor sinners, I ought to accustom myself to the disagreeable odor.

LETTER No. XXXIII.

New-York, *October* 10, 1856.

My Dear —:

I went to see the Wood & Christy Minstrels last evening, in company with a little Christian maiden, six years old, and a venerable damsel of three-score and ten, neither of whom had ever “seen anything of the kind before.” Half of my pleasure consisted in watching the effect of the performances upon my two companions representing the opposite extremes of life. When the curtain was drawn up, exhibiting a rainbow of shining darkies, my little friend, who has not been long out of heaven, laughed; while the other, who cannot remain long away from it, looked grave and thoughtful; but when George began to rattle his bones, and the full minstrel band wailed over us their plaintive songs, there seemed to gather 15* 334 a moisture about the eyes of both that came very near being precipitated into a tear. How different must have been the emotions of my two companions that produced the same result. I wonder if a chemist by analyzing the joyful dew drops that we call tears in the eyes of a child, and the sad drops that fall from the care-fraught eyes of age, would be able to detect any essential difference in the elements that compose, them? But this, as the poet says, “were to inquire too curiously.” I have heard it said that joy and sorrow are, in effect, nearly, if not absolutely the same; but I don't believe in any such philosophical logic.

The Poet Heinè talks about. “the black honeymoon of Death;” and says that persons in profound affliction are as gentle and tender as when deeply and happily in love. I only know that this sad, sweet music, such for instance as the “Spirit Bride,” so beautifully sung by these colored minstrels, makes me feel happier than the liveliest air that was ever set to

the bounding pulsations of joy. And why is it? Because all the music of Nature is plaintive; and all its sounds are in the minor key. The notes of the robin, the trills of the thrush; the complaint of the whip-poor-will; the moanings of the nightingale; and even the exultations of the sky-piercing lark—

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“Whose lay is in heaven, Whose love is on earth,”—

are all too earnest, too serious, too beautiful to inspire gaiety—but a serene sadness rather. And hence the never-failing pleasure afforded by these simple singing minstrels, with their “Dearest Mays” and “Lucy Neals”—their “Poor Uncle Neds” and “Old Folks at Home.” In adopting the rustic negro garb they sacrifice Art to Nature; and give us the pastoral lays of the corn and cotton fields, instead of the artificial airs of the Academies. They sing of love, and hope, and disappointment, and death; but it is for some true-hearted Dinah, and not for a dainty Dutchess, that they make us sigh.

The burthen of their melodies is in harmony with the homely music of every-day life; and the masses love it for what it makes them forget and for what it makes them remember. So these Minstrel Halls are always crowded, as Wood's and Christy's was crammed last night; and that too, with a well dressed, decorous, and delighted-looking class of people. Cousin Lou, who always has an eye to financial success, says Wood and Christy are making $30,000 a year by these entertainments, which are *never* “postponed on account of the weather;” and so great is the desire to witness their performances, that 336 on rainy nights the jams are greatest, because so many persons think on such evenings they will be able to secure better seats.

LETTER No. XXXIV.

New-York, *October* 16, 1857.

My Dear —:

Bowery —that's a pretty word, suggestive of the “the shady shadow of umbrageous trees” and a *dolce far niente* state of existence. The very sound is redolent of romance; and fraught with fragrant and flowery associations. The Bowery-way the Bowery-street—how soft and poetic in comparison with the Broadway! Besides, the latter has an unpleasant Biblical significance that often makes us shudder, especially as poetized by the sombre orthodox psalmist.

“Broad is the way that leads to death, And thousands walk together there, But wisdom shows a narrow path, With here and there a traveller.”

But this is a digression to begin with. My pen of late, which the New-Orleans Picayune says I should “never nib” (I don't know what he means by it), has 337 decidedly a discursive tendency, and requires a constant restraint to overcome “the centrifugal force.” “John Brougham in the Bowery” is the “head of my discourse” to-day; so I must stick to my text.

After considerable remonstrating on the part of certain prudent female “friends and guardians,” I at last received permission for “one night only,” to appear at the Bowery Theatre, under the gallant protection of Cousin Lou and a couple of extra attendants. From the early impressions of childhood, gathered from reading occasional stories of “Life in Gotham,” with a scrap or two of “Hot Corn,” “New-York by Gas-Light,” &c., &c., (books strictly and justly forbidden at Madame Chegary's boarding-school—but “stolen fruit,” you know, we girls do love to nibble), I was prepared, on entering, to encounter a great and peculiar odor composed of rum, garlic, gas, and peanuts; but was agreeably surprised to find an atmosphere free from all offensive impurities; and a well-dressed, well-behaved, respectable-looking crowd of people. The house is elegantly painted, brilliantly lighted, and in every respect presents the appearance of a first-class theatre. Cousin Lou says all these changes have been effected by the magic wand of Brougham; and that the ancient

338 glory of the “Bowery,” as a “peculiar institution,” with its shirt sleeves in the pit, and its “hi! hi!” shouts in the gallery, has entirely departed.

The principal play last evening was a Frenchy piece, called “Retribution,” which was attentively witnessed; but with very little demonstration of applause. Mr. Brougham played the hero—the part of the injured husband; and the “moral” of the plot consists in making the innocent party the victim. This I know often, if not usually, happens in real life (Lord, how the wicked prosper!) but I confess I prefer to see a little poetic justice administered to the villains of the stage, if only for “the novelty of the thing.” And yet, I suppose the dramatists think they must follow Nature and Shakspeare (Nature interpreted and set to music), and continue to show up virtue as “its own reward,” because, in this world, it seldom receives any other. Desdemona—all sweetness, and purity, and truth—is murdered by him to whom her very soul is wedded; the dutiful Cordelia is triumphed over by her unnatural sisters; the fair Ophelia's heart is crushed in the fragrant fullness of its first affections; the gentle Juliet dies a victim to her delicious dream of love; and so on through the whole catalogue of ideal women, who are made to illustrate the saddest fact in the history 339 of humanity—the eternal sacrifice upon that common altar with this inscription: “ To the Love that Fate forbids. ” How many of the fairest flowers of creation have been offered up to wither there?

The part of the tempter in this play of “Retribution” was tolerably well acted by Miss Kate Reignolds, who evidently believes that woman's witchery lies in fantastic ringlets, in the tender

—“tangles of Nerea's hair.”

At the fall of the curtain there was a loud call for Brougham, whose funny speech was the best part of the performance. No stenography could do it justice.

LETTER No. XXXV.

New-York, *October* 2, 1856

My Dear —:

People who think it a sin to laugh should never enter Burton's Theatre, which is literally a “place of amusement,” a temple of Momus. Whether or not it is better for the heart to laugh than to cry, I am sure it is decidedly better for the liver. It promotes 340 digestion, and throws off care and bile at the same time. I know it is said that the best men who have ever lived were not much given to cachination—Washington seldom laughed; a greater than Washington, never. But the one was solemnly charged with the redemption of a world, and the salvation of mankind; and the other with the revolution of a nation and the establishment of human liberty. For us, poor every-day sinners, who have no such grave mission to fulfill, there surely can be no harm in a little innocent laughter at the mimic scenes of the stage, wherein our own faults are fairly burlesqued; while the ridicule in which we join is a shaft aimed at our own follies. There is no criticism so trenchant, no censorship so effective as the satirical comedy of the drama; and the harder it hits the more we applaud.

Is there, for instance, any better looking-glass in which a smooth-faced, money-worshiping hypocrite may “see himself as others see him,” than the Rev. Aminidab Sleek, as portrayed by Burton in the “Serious Family?” Or where shall we find the common-place, nonsensical bickerings of domestic life so admirably hit off, and forced home with “a moral,” as in the comical trials and tribulations of the “Toodles?” I have seen sober, housekeeping-looking 341 ladies “laugh till they cried” at the ridiculous absurdities of Mrs. Toodle's purchases, without, apparently, suspecting themselves of committing almost daily similar follies. And yet, I have no doubt, a little after-reflection upon the lessons conveyed in this wholesome satire may have checked an idle propensity to buy useless articles, merely because they were “so cheap, and so convenient to have in the house.”

With a little of this sort of vague philosophy as a basis for my conscience to rest upon, I go to the theatre expressly for amusement, seasoned with a little incidental instruction. Perhaps I could spend my time time better elsewhere; and I know I could spend it a great deal worse.

The *unco guid* invite me to forsake the evil ways of the theatre, and take to “conference meetings.” But I do not enjoy their vapid prayers and prosy exhortations; and what my inmost nature rejects and protests against I know is not good for me, any more than the poison that nauseates my taste is good for the body. “The theatre is the gate of hell,” thunders the priest. Very well; I cannot help it. I'm in for it. I have heard of a Wall-street broker who wanted to have the exercises of the stock board opened with prayer! Such a sombre saint as he 342 would never allow the sunshine of Burton's wit to enlighten his hard humanities; but he is a man one well might fear to meet alone in the dark with a pocket full of money.

So much for my musings before arriving at Burton's. Here we are. What a splendid house! Lighted, as the Italians say, *a giorno;* and every thing looking new, elegant, and brilliant. The house is well filled. The play—“The Wreckers—a Dream a Sea.” It is a wild, wicked, melo-dramatic affair, relieved by one huge piece of fun in the shape of the great Burton—a tipsy tax collector, with an ardent fondness for the “flowing bowl,” which is often upon his lips. His corkscrew entrance is greeted with roars of laughter; and for the time being, every heart in all that vast crowd is relieved of its private burthen of peculiar cares, while transitory gleams of joy sparkle in every eye. It is a pleasant sight to see two or three thousand heavy, thought-worn, time-wrinkled human faces thus suddenly lighted up with rays of good humor, and transported, if only for a moment, into a blessed oblivion of themselves. The gloomy fog, which seemed to rest upon the audience—the condensed vapors arising in silent sighs from a thousand “heart-burnings”—lifts and vanishes; everybody looks and feels radiant, amiable, 343 and happy; and when the play is over, they who came to the theatre enveloped in clouds of electric moroseness, return

to their homes cheerful and serene; and all in consequence of having “had a good laugh at Burton's.”

Such being the legitimate and benign effect of a good comedy, well acted, I must honestly regard Burton as a great and glorious institution; and conscientiously congratulate the public on his accession to so capacious and splendid a threatre, where the light of his comic countenance will no longer be hid under a bushel. With so fine a house, so central a location, and so good a company, Mr. Burton's success can hardly fail to equal his hopes. Among the unfamiliar faces at Burton's, Polly Marshall's is making a favorable impression. Plump as a partridge, with a symmetrical, well-finished figure, and a sprightly versatility of manner, she pleases the ladies and rather fascinates the gentlemen.

The acting of Mr. and Mrs. Davenport is good of its kind, earnest and effective, and evidently appreciated by the masses; but after the bibulous Burton had once filled the stage with his peculiar presence, and surcharged the atmosphere of the house with the comic contagion of his indescribable countenance, the tragedy passages of the play were at a discount. What would “Burton's” be without Burton?

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LETTER No. XXXVI.

New-York, —, 1857.

My Dear —:

It is a blessed thing to love, to worship, to adore; and it does not follow, that all who find in Nature and in Art plentiful inspirations of these blissful and exalting emotions are necessarily atheists. On the contrary, I regard an atheist as a moral monstrosity, if not a logical impossibility. Whatever is good and beautiful in man, is God manifest in the flesh; whatever is grand and lovely in Nature, is God manifest in his works; and whatever in Art approaches the truth and beauty of either, rises as near to the Divinity as the finite

possibilities of human conception and human skill can go. The most beautiful visions of Nature—the shining heavens, the sparkling stars, the blossoming trees, the glittering gems; and the intelligent radiance of “the human face divine,” are but varied revelations of the veiled and incomprehensible Deity—the infinite Soul of Love and Beauty, in which all things live, move, and have their being. The universal desire, and prayer, and longing of the poor benighted human heart, from the cradle to the grave, is for light from 345 this celestial ray, for music from the eternal fountain of harmony, for love from the everlasting and ineffable Love that made us. This is the religion of the Beautiful, to which all must become disciples, in order to appreciate the inconceivable glories of the world that surrounds us, or to partake of the beatitudes of the heaven that lies before us. Baptized in the spirit of that unsectarian and universal Church, whose worship is in the Temple of the Beautiful—a house not made with hands—I find an altar everywhere in Nature; and a medium of adoration in every worthy work of Art.

With this burning thirst for inspiration, this perpetual panting for a purer atmosphere, this restless desire to nestle nearer and nearer to the bosom of the Great Mother of us all, who

“—never did betray The heart that loved her,”

I devoutly enter the sanctuary of Art, and wait, like a serene and silent Quaker, for the “moving of the spirit.” And what is there in this “Academy of Design,” with all its brilliant array of colored canvas, its five hundred and fifty separate “works,” to unseal the vision and flood our hearts with “the light that never yet hath shone on sea or land?”

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In the first place, I am confronted and affronted with a portrait of Almighty God, accompanied by an angel of wrath driving a miserable pair of human wretches out of Paradise into a world of sin, and sorrow, and death! The blasphemy of the conception is not redeemed by any artistic merit in the execution. The figure and the face of the God are altogether repulsive; while the deputy crouching at his feet with the “flaming sword” lacks

the dignity of a decent policeman. And as for Adam and Eve, such small-potato looking “first parents” are quite enough to reconcile one to Lord Monboddo's theory of the origin of mankind. It is altogether a shocking conception, and only fit for a target in a shooting gallery.

What a relief to close the eyes upon this nightmare “expulsion,” and raise them to Church's “Andes,” where the grandeur and the beauty of the Creator are exhibited in the lofty mountains, and diffused through the misty sun-shine. Through all the vastness, wildness, and even dreariness of the scene, the spirit of love and beauty kindles and glows, while the pure water comes gushing down in liquid life, refreshing the “place beneath” like a benediction. The sentiment of humanity is not wanting to complete the pleasing impression. There is an altar 347 in the foreground, before which a woman is kneeling, while her lover comes, unseen, to witness her devotion. This little touch of nature envelops the picture in an atmosphere of romance, and warms the imagination with the glowing emotion of religion. There is no “angry God” in my “theology” to expel a loving pair from an Eden like this.

In the department of portraiture, the present Exhibition is abundant in numbers, but meagre in merit. The “counterfeit presentment” of humanity must either possess striking lineaments of strength or beauty, or evince rare artistic skill in the drawing and the finishing, to excite interest in the general observer. Almost any picture of man or woman, when looked at through the eye of friendship or lovership, becomes an object of admiration, and even of affection. The most unromantic of us have sometimes kissed a miniature, perhaps sweetened our sleep by placing it under our pillow. It must be owing to this feeling, to this exaggeration of individual sentiment, that we see so many ugly faces staring at us. from the walls of the Academy; with scarcely one heroic man or beautiful woman represented among them all. With the exception of two or three sweet faces by Baker, there is nothing to make me feel jealous of Cousin Lou's admiration; and as for

the 348 masculine “frontispieces,” I would rather look at the living head by my side one blessed minute, than to gaze on these “dead heads” for any indefinite period.

LETTER No. XXXVII.

New-York Hotel, 1858.

My Dear —:

Matrimony is a great institution. The corresponding sexes were made for each other, like the halves of a pair of scissors. A primal necessity brings them together, and the union, when regulated by law, becomes a marriage—a bargain, a contract. In other words, the parties become mutual properties, inviolate and inalienable. The law regulating the intercourse of the sexes is one of the fundamental laws of society. All civilized, and even barbarous nations observe it; and in most countries, the rite or ceremony of marriage is regarded both as a religious consecration and a civil compact.

The sentimental nonsense about “matches being made in heaven;” and the priestly mummery about men and women being indissolubly “joined together 349 by God,” for time and eternity, is precisely what makes marriage a farce in the beginning, and a tragedy in the end. In a fit of foolish passion a simpleton of a girl, who has been reared like a delicate plant in a green-house, rushes to some poor parson (licensed, for a fee, to rivet male and female together), puts her little white hand into the “huge paw” of her father's coachman, and is solemnly sold for life—under the awful injunction—“Whom God has joined together let not man put asunder.” With all due respect to the “holy institution of matrimony,” I cannot help feeling that, in a case like this, the name of God is taken in vain.

When the eternal affinities draw man and woman together; when their souls and bodies are in perfect harmony with each other; and there flows from and into the hearts of both the sweet melody of love, then there is a marriage indeed; and the white angels of heaven

may attend as bridesmaids. Upon such a scene, it is neither absurd nor blasphemous to invoke the name of God and the blessings of Nature.

We hear much of marriage in high life and marriage in low life; of good matches and bad matches; and occasionally of a cross between the upper and lower spheres of society, that greatly shocks the proprieties. 16 350 The questions, who to marry, how to marry, and when to marry, are seldom discussed in the newspapers; but they are the most important topics of life. They come home to the very bosoms of all our families; involving the health, the happiness, and the fortunes of our sons and daughters, to say nothing of the coming generations, “waiting upon the shores of Lethe, to be born.”

I take it for granted that it is the great problem of all parents, especially mothers, to see their children, particularly their daughters, what they call “well married.” And it is a fact which cannot be honestly denied, that the desire to better the condition of their children, socially and financially, enters largely into the matrimonial calculations of all parties. There is a straining to rise a degree or two above their present social STATUS, and to better their condition generally—in a word, to make what the fashionable world calls “an eligible match,” is the great ambition of mothers who have daughters “in the market.”

The sympathetic affinities are not consulted—the eternal fitness of things is not considered. The tendrils of young hearts are rudely rent from where they *would* fasten; and the affections are bent and pruned into compliance with the cruel exactions of the conventionalities 351 Now and then a hot temperament rebels; and a “runaway match” ensues.

The principal cause of these domestic misunderstandings and *faux pas* , may be traced to the utter lack of confidence between parents and children on the delicate subject of matrimony. The young maiden in love hides her sweet secret in a sort of blissful shame, even from the bosom of her mother—

“She never tells her love, But lets concealment,” &c.

This is all wrong. Upon the very first symptom of the delicious disease, the maternal doctor should be consulted; and the “case” carefully and candidly considered. If the attachment is serious, threatening to be dangerous, the treatment should be gentle and skillful. Fierce opposition will only inflame the fever and lead to fatal results. Is the “object of the young lady's affections” objectionable on the score of character, looks, poverty, ignorance, disease, or social position, tell her so plainly; and in nine cases out of ten, reason will convince her that gross disparity in circumstances can only lead to conjugal infelicity; and time will complete the cure that reflection has begun.

On the other hand, the violent mode of treatment 352 will bring wretchedness to the patient, and suffering to her family. Parental tyranny incites filial rebellion; and the lock and key, or “temporary absence in Europe,” only hastens the catastrophe. Fathers and mothers, let me affectionately and respectfully commend to you a more intimate acquaintance with the hearts of your daughters, especially on the delicate, dangerous, and vital subject of matrimony.

LETTER No. XXXVIII.

New-York, —, 1858.

My Dear —:

I went to see Forrest last night at the Broadway Theatre—the great, the stalwart, the celebrated American Tragedian. The play was “Damon and Pythias.” The house was full. Cousin Lou was not with me. I was not happy; but in the progress of the play I forgot myself. I am glad I went. Can I make the readers of the *Mirror* glad of it also? Perhaps some of them. I'll try. Mr. Forrest is the Anak of the stage—the Boanerges of actors. He has a Romanesque physique; “a combination and a form” worthy of the toga. His face is expressive; 353 but rather of strong passion than of nice intellectual perception; and his

voice better suited to command armies than to woo women. His step is stately rather than graceful; and his movements more of the elephantine than of the feline order. All this I saw upon his entrance upon the stage, which was boisterously greeted, and proudly and impressively acknowledged.

The play of “Damon and Pythias,” as all the world knows, is based upon the chivalrous, self-sacrificing sentiment of Friendship—a sentiment more easily simulated upon the stage than acted out in real life—another fact that all the world knows, except Freshmen at college, and bread-and-butter girls at school.

But the stronger element of Love is not wanting. Damon and Hermione, Pythias and Calanthe are, madly “in for it;” and that, too, after the frantic fashion of the early ages, when love was a romance, and not a conventional business. They remind us of the passionate lovers of “Festus,” who defy God and Death to part them; and press each other's lips until they bleed like crushed grapes.

In the tender scenes, Mr. Forrest lacked tenderness; but in the forum and in the fight, he was terrific. Damon is a disciple of Pythagoras; and his 16* 354 sentiments are those of a patriot, a philosopher, and a democrat. His friendship for Pythias, his brother Senator, “passes the love of women.” For him he will sacrifice wife, child, life, and all the world. Such heroic fidelity as this makes grand poetry; but the ties of nature should be stronger than friendship. The weeping Hermione and the kneeling little one appeal to a higher law than the law of brotherhood; and no vow of friendship can absolve the more sacred obligations of love. “Damon and Pythias” I must therefore regard as a noble, but unnatural story. While admiring the attachment of the friends, I feel as if there was something lacking between the lovers. If *I* had a Damon, who would consent to leave me and my little one, and go and lay down his life for his friend, I should feel that his love was no match for mine.

In the case of Pythias, who takes the risk of death on his wedding-day, driving his beautiful bride to distraction, the stoicism of the play is still more shocking. But I am expressing the sentiments of a woman, and perhaps giving utterance to more feeling than philosophy.

Mrs. Davenport (Lizzie Weston) played the part of the loving, broken-hearted Calanthe charmingly. She is a handsome woman, and she entered into the 355 passion of the piece in a womanly and artistic manner. In the scene where she almost peremptorily prays the Sun to pause in his descent, that Damon may return in time to save her lover's life—crying to all the elements to add wings to his speed; commanding the hard earth to become liquid, and “flow with him hither;” and again, where but a minute more of hope is left, she peers into the distance with supernatural vision, and shrieks and swoons away as the executioner tears her from the arms of Pythias, Mrs. Davenport exhibited a tragic power that I have rarely seen surpassed on the stage.

The role of Pythias by Mr. Daly was cleverly, though very unequally rendered; and Mrs. Ponisi's Hermione was all that could be desired. I have nothing further to add, except to complain of the hideous shouts and whistles in the gallery, which frightened “nervous ladies;” and will prevent them from subjecting their ears to such terrific yells oftener than once a month, even to see the “Great American Trageidan.” Where's the police?”

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LETTER No. XXXIX.

“ The Pavilion,” Rockaway, *June* 2, 1858.

My Dear —:

As thousands of your readers know as little of this charming place as I did but a few hours ago, I will endeavor to give them a brief description of the premises, of the location, and the way to get there. The “ *Pavilion Hotel* ” is a large building, situated close to the sea, and commanding from its front windows an unbroken view of the ocean, embracing nearly

a third of the circle of the horizon. The entire length of the house is over four hundred feet. In the rear there is a pleasant lawn, with numerous trees, and containing ten pretty little white cottages. The establishment will accommodate about five hundred persons. The dining hall will seat four hundred. The ladies' drawing-room is very spacious, and most of the rooms are superior in every respect to those usually found in summer hotels. In the way of amusements, there are billiard saloons, bowling alleys, fine drives, safe and excellent surf bathing, &c., &c. That the hotel will be well kept this season, the public have a sufficient guarantee in the name of the new proprietor, Mr. Francis Rider, of 357 the “ *St. Germain* ,” and for eleven years the popular proprietor of the “West Point Hotel.” His rooms are being rapidly taken, and everything promises a full and fashionable “season” at Rockaway. Several of our city belles will be here in the course of a week or two, and then with youth, beauty, music, and mirth, we are counting on the gayest of times.

I am almost ashamed to confess that this is my first visit to Rockaway; and I am still more ashamed to think how often I have “been farther to fare worse.” But a fatality, in my case, may be offered as an apology. In former years, I have three several times engaged to drive to Rockaway, and each time been prevented by the death of persons related to some of the party. The fourth engagement was broken by a storm, and only the *fifth* appointment has brought me here. I am fascinated with the place. The environs of the “ *Pavilion* ” are very pleasant. There are dozens of small hotels and boarding-houses, and many beautiful private cottages. Among the finest are Honorable Horace F. Clark's and Mr. Hiram Cranston's; the former situated on the extreme point of land, with the lips of the sea kissing its feet, and the latter on a beautiful plane of elevated ground embowered in a grove of ever-green cedars.

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But the great charm of the place is the sea—the blue, the free, the open, the eternal sea. I never look upon its “azure brow” on which “Time writes no wrinkles,” without a thrill of new delight; and its murmurs never fail to lull me into a state of tranquil exaltation. Emblem of

Eternity—throne of the Invisible—mirror of the Almighty—who does not love and reverence the sea!

“I never was of the dull, tame shore, But I loved the great sea more and more, And backward flew to its billowy breast, Like a bird that seeketh its mother's nest.”

Last night, in the serene stillness and beauty to midnight, I saw the calm, mild moon—the gentle Christ of the solar system—rise out of the heaving bosom of the great deep, making the night holy and hopeful, by the tender light of her sweet, sad smile. The long, white beach, bordering the dark water, stretched away in the unbounded distance, looking like the ghostly pathway of departed spirits. And the mystic strain of the poet “stole like music on my soul:”

“In moments of calm weather, Our souls have sight of that immortal sea Which brought us hither;— Can, in a moment, travel thither; And see the children sport upon the shore, And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.”

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But I am far away from Rockaway. This is not telling “all the world and its wife” how to come here and be blest. And I have only room to say, like a guidebook—go to the South Ferry, take the cars to Jamaica, thence the stage to Rockaway; and here you are—in the brief space of two hours, transported from the noise and noisomeness of the great city, to the silence, the solemnity, the mystery, and the music of the Great Sea. Then—

“Come—come dwell with me, And our home—our home shall be A pleasant cot, in a tranquil spot, With a distant view of the changing sea. The streamlet, as it flows along, Is murmuring a fairy song; The tendrils of the purple vine Around our rustic casement twine. Then come with me—come dwell with me,” &c., &c.

Yours, to surf it for a while. —